

The Wartime Diversion of U.S. Navy Forces in Response to Public Demands for Augmented Coastal Defense

by

Adam B. Siegel



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ABSTRACT

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In the event of a U.S.-U.S.S.R. conflict, the Soviet Union might choose to operate a small number of nuclear-powered attack submarines in U.S. coastal waters. This paper considers the possibility that the effects of such operations on U.S. public opinion could require the U.S. Navy to redeploy Navy assets away from forward operations to augment coastal defenses. During past conflicts, American military forces have, in fact, been diverted from other missions precisely to counter perceived threats to the Continental United States (CONUS). In some instances, the diversion was driven less by a purely military evaluation of the threat than by a public outcry for reassuring defensive measures. The paper examines the U.S. experience with threats to CONUS or coastal waters during four wars (the Civil War, the Spanish-American War, World War I, and World War II). It attempts to place real, present concerns about the public's possible future reaction to Soviet SSN operations off the U.S. coasts within a broader historical context.

Soviet submarine-launched conventional-SLCM attacks could result from a variety of motivations. Purely military objectives could be the dominant Soviet motive, and facilities such as the Pentagon, airfields, or operating bases might be prime targets. Attacks might also originate from a Soviet imperative to respond in kind to any U.S. attacks on the Soviet Union. No matter what the specific motivating factor or targets of Soviet SSN operations off the coast, the public reaction, especially to cruise-missile strikes on coastal targets, could lead to a political imperative for the Navy to commit additional assets to eliminate the submarine threat beyond the forces already involved in antisubmarine warfare (ASW) operations in coastal waters. Such a requirement would almost inevitably draw forces away from potentially more important operations elsewhere in the world.

This paper highlights relevant episodes in the U.S. historical experience in a search for insights about what happened -- and why. U.S. forces were, in fact, diverted to face threats to coastal regions in each of the wars examined. Military judgement as to the appropriate defenses was not always the leading factor in the decision to divert forces.

Early in the Civil War, for example, marauding Confederate raiders presented a threat to Union shipping off the New England coasts. Secretary of the Navy Gideon Welles resisted pressures to divert ships to hunt down the Confederate ships and concentrated upon tightening the blockade on southern ports. It was not until the blockade was tightly in place that the U.S. Navy began to divert large numbers of ships to hunt the raiders.

At the beginning of the Spanish-American war, public fears were fueled by inaccurate news commentaries about the strength of the Spanish Navy. Concern that the Spanish fleet would bombard coastal cities created a political imperative for greatly augmented coastal defenses. The Navy, unable to resist the political pressures, was forced to splinter its Atlantic squadron so ships could make port calls to reassure the public.

Upon the U.S. entry into World War I, Navy leadership was divided as to the best naval strategy for conducting the war. Fears that German U-boats or even elements of the German High Seas Fleet could operate off the U.S. coast fueled arguments against deploying substantial forces to the Eastern Atlantic to aid in the protection of shipping. The Navy leadership's concern over U-boat operations in the Western Atlantic, which did not materialize until mid-1918, delayed the U.S. Navy's full participation in the main battle against the German underseas fleet.

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In World War II, the U.S. faced a variety of threats to its coast. The shock that followed Pearl Harbor led to major augmentation of west coast defenses, including the diversion of a coastal artillery unit, en route the Philippines, to the Washington coast. In May 1942, prior to the Battle of Midway, civil defense officials, fearing a Japanese raid, distributed the nation's stock of gas masks to the civilian populace of California. Later in the war, even more exotic threats emerged. Over a six-month period, the Japanese launched 9,300 balloon bombs in the world's first intercontinental bombing campaign. Fighter squadrons were used to intercept the balloons and paratroopers were deployed to fight forest fires that might be caused by the incendiary bombs. In early 1945, the Navy countered far-fetched but potentially serious threats to both coasts. In late March, a carrier task force was formed off San Francisco to protect the city from a feared Japanese raid during the scheduled U.N. Conference on International Organization. In April, two U.S. Navy hunter-killer groups stalked and destroyed Group *Seewolf*, six U-boats that were feared to be carrying rockets to attack New York City.

The situations in which diversions of disproportionate forces to defend CONUS occurred seem to fall into three main categories:

- **Excess force available:** At the end of both the Civil War and World War II, when faced with a threat, the Navy had enough assets available to devote significant forces to defensive operations without seriously affecting the conduct of offensive operations.
- **Military disagreement in threat assessment:** During the opening months of U.S. participation in World War I, it appears that it was the military split over the nature and severity of the threat that caused a misallocation of resources -- not public pressure.
- **Political leadership ill-informed:** At the beginning of the Spanish-American War, the Navy failed to convince the political leadership of the logic of its preferred force employment pattern. This failure quickly led to political pressure on the Navy to divide the Atlantic squadron in response to public outcries for direct and perceptible defense measures.

Despite the difficulties involved in applying lessons of the past to any future Soviet threat, it seems that the most dangerous situations arise when the political-military decision-makers are badly informed about the actual military situation. Under those circumstances, the military leadership may respond to unexpected setbacks with undue caution, and the political leadership may respond to public pressure by calling for obviously defensive military redeployments. Furthermore, such public pressure is most likely to build in a situation when the general populace remains ill-informed about the actual military situation. The historical experience of the United States indicates that, when the military leadership has clearly and coherently articulated the basis for its deployments and operations, the political leadership has generally acquiesced to the professional judgment of the military commander, despite the possibility of threats to CONUS and even in the face of adverse public pressure.

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INTRODUCTION

In the event of a U.S.-U.S.S.R. conflict, the Soviet Union might choose to operate a small number of nuclear-powered attack submarines in U.S. coastal waters. This paper considers the possibility that the effects of such operations on U.S. public opinion could require the U.S. Navy to redeploy Navy assets away from forward operations to augment coastal defenses. During past conflicts, American military forces have, in fact, been diverted from other missions precisely to counter perceived threats to the Continental United States (CONUS). In some instances, the diversion was driven less by a purely military evaluation of the threat than by a public outcry for reassuring defensive measures. The paper examines the U.S. experience with threats to CONUS or coastal waters during four wars (the Civil War, the Spanish-American War, World War I, and World War II). It attempts to place real, present concerns about the public's possible future reaction to Soviet SSN operations off the U.S. coasts within a broader historical context.

Soviet submarine-launched conventional-SLCM attacks could result from a variety of motivations. Purely military objectives could be the dominant Soviet motive, and facilities such as the Pentagon, airfields, or operating bases might be prime targets. Attacks might also originate from a Soviet imperative to respond in kind to any U.S. attacks on the Soviet Union. No matter what the specific motivating factor or targets of Soviet SSN operations off the coast, the public reaction, especially to cruise-missile strikes on coastal targets, could lead to a political imperative for the Navy to commit additional assets to eliminate the submarine threat beyond the forces already involved in antisubmarine warfare (ASW) operations in coastal waters. Such a requirement would almost inevitably draw forces away from potentially more important operations elsewhere in the world.

This paper does not address the likelihood that a Soviet threat to the coast might materialize. Nor does it attempt to extrapolate from historical experience into the present and future to recommend policies for handling a potential public outcry. Rather the objective is to try to generalize from the past about the most likely conditions that could lead to pressure for the redistribution of forces, and to identify options open to military leaders that might best deal with that pressure. Further analysis would be required to develop the contemporary plans and policies that are implied.

This research is based mainly on secondary works, which provided enough information to reach general conclusions. More exhaustive examination of primary evidence could well turn up interesting nuance or detail. However, it is unlikely that additional research would alter the main findings.

Civilian and military responses to threats to U.S. territory or coastal waters have varied widely. On one extreme, during the Spanish-American War, public hysteria along the eastern seaboard led to a fragmentation of the fleet, as Navy ships made port calls in New England to reassure the public in the face of a feared (but implausible) Spanish threat. On the other end of the spectrum, Japanese seizure of the Aleutians and some uncertainty about Japanese intentions did not deflect important U.S. Navy elements from participation in the pivotal Battle of Midway despite considerable concern over the possibility of Japanese strikes against California. A principal question to consider, therefore, in examining the historical record is whether the U.S. military perceived the response to be inappropriate to the threat. If so, the next question is whether that disparity between requirements and the actual response was due to pressure from the civilian community.

This examination of the U.S. experience with threats to the coast provides a context within which to examine the potential threat of Soviet SSN operations near the U.S. coasts. In essence, it seems that the principal issue facing U.S. commanders has been that they must be prepared to face a public challenge to their methods and means of operations; that the possibility exists that the

military's evaluation of the threat and the political leadership's requirement to assuage a worried public could lead to different conclusions about the proper military response. With the growth of mass media and proliferation of pollsters and their increased importance in the U.S. political process, public opinion will probably influence military decisions to a greater extent in the future than in the past. Thus, the public perception of the military situation could become paramount even more readily than in the past. If it is generally believed, especially by the political leadership, that the proper forces have been allocated to antisubmarine warfare (and anti-air warfare) missions and that the threat is being countered in the most appropriate manner, the buildup of pressure great enough to force an irrational military response seems unlikely. If, on the other hand, the public perception of the military situation is ignored, public concern might produce sufficient political pressure that force allocations would be determined less by military judgment than by political expedience.

The discussion begins with a broad outline of the postulated Soviet threat. It proceeds to an examination of the U.S. historical experience with threats to the coast or coastal waters and concludes by highlighting the lessons of this experience and their relevance today.

THE POSTULATED SOVIET THREAT

The threat posed by Soviet nuclear-powered attack submarines operating off the coasts of the United States is multifaceted. Not only might they potentially threaten SSBNs as they enter or exit port, but Soviet SSNs operating in U.S. coastal waters could pose a threat to Navy ships and sealift transiting to and from CONUS and could be targeted against other types of shipping in a campaign reminiscent of the German U-boat attacks of early 1942 off the east coast. The threat could also extend ashore, both with conventional or nuclear-armed missiles. (The possibility that the Soviets might have or might in the future develop a *Tomahawkskii* cruise missile with both nuclear- and conventionally-armed variants should not be ignored.) The Soviets could also employ submarines to insert *Spetsnaz* units to conduct sabotage operations. However, this last possibility should not in itself create additional demands upon U.S. Navy assets (which would already be engaged in the antisubmarine war) but instead would add to pressures upon the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and other police agencies.

The Soviets are unlikely to pursue all these options simultaneously, due to the relatively few modern, survivable SSNs (and, thus, limited payloads) that are likely to be available in the near future. This limitation grows if one considers the other missions that are likely to be high priorities for the Soviet SSN fleet (such as the defense of Soviet SSBNs in the bastions). Therefore, the Soviets will likely concentrate their assets on one or two of these target sets. Which mission would have the highest priority is highly scenario dependent.

A basic tenet of Soviet strategy calls for "suppressing the potential of an opponent's war economy. ... It envisages ... demoralizing the populace and the personnel of the armed forces. ... This task ... should be performed by the destruction of vitally important targets on an opponent's territory."¹ Although discussed in the context of a strategic strike, attacking the enemy's will to resist -- his "moral-political potential" -- would also be important during a conventional conflict.

Even so, a Soviet conventional-SLCM attack upon the U.S. mainland might seem unlikely unless the U.S. has attacked the Soviet homeland. It seems plausible that the Soviets might consider using conventional SLCMs for "analogous-response" strikes against the U.S. following any U.S. strike against targets on Soviet soil.² This revenge motive should not be discounted. The Japanese placed great emphasis on devising means for striking back at the United States following the Halsey-Doolittle raid. The first (only) intercontinental air strike campaign, the Japanese 1944-45 balloon-bombing campaign, resulted from this emphasis. The Soviets may not feel as driven as the Japanese high command, who believed in April 1942 that they had failed in their duty to protect the emperor. On the other hand, the Soviets express strong feelings about "Mother Russia" and Soviet weaponry can be expected to be much more accurate and lethal than the Japanese balloon bombs. Development of a conventionally-armed cruise missile would allow the Soviets to make such strikes against CONUS with much greater ease than any of the threats considered in this paper and thus would present the most serious non-nuclear threat to CONUS since the War of 1812.

Strikes against targets ashore, and the specific targets attacked, can be used as a means of communication between belligerents. The Soviets might feel compelled to use such conventional

1. RAdm. N.P. V'yunenkov, Capt. 1st B.N. Makeyev, and Capt. 1st V.D. Skugarev, *Voyenno-morskoy Flot: rol', perspektivy razvitiya, ispolzovaniye* (The Navy: Its Role, Prospects for Development, and Employment), ed. by Fleet Adm. S.G. Gorshkov, Moscow, Voenizdat, 1988, p. 38.

2. Analogous response is a pre-INF treaty Soviet term referring to a Soviet desire to respond analogously to U.S. use of European-based GLCMs and Pershing IIs to conduct nuclear strikes on the Soviet Union (i.e., with nuclear weapons *not* launched from Soviet territory). It does not seem unreasonable to conceptualize a Soviet requirement for some sort of conventional strike "analogous response" capability. This conjecture is based on this analyst's understanding of Soviet military theory.

SLCM attacks on U.S. territory to signal to the American leadership that they are not only able but also willing to respond in kind to U.S. actions. One can argue that the Soviets might decide to strike CONUS as a means of dissuading further U.S. strikes onto Soviet territory. Therefore, conventional SLCM strikes against CONUS might not be simply retaliatory, but might also be a source of leverage (combined with diplomatic initiatives) to induce the U.S. political leadership to oppose further strike operations against Soviet territory.

In addition, any Soviet presence off the coast will carry with it the specter of nuclear warfare. If the United States and Soviet Union are in a global conventional conflict in the early 1990s, absent a startling breakthrough in the strategic defense or arms control arenas, the entire war will be colored by the possibility of nuclear escalation. Soviet submarine operations off or against CONUS will carry this threat closer to the shores in the public mind. While the U.S. would remain just as vulnerable to ballistic missiles, the threat nearby might dominate the public perception of the possible escalation of the conflict to nuclear war. Thus, if Soviet submarines launched conventional SLCM strikes against coastal targets, every missile could possibly foster a panic response that the next warhead might be a nuclear one. In such an environment, the public's demands for extensive ASW and air defense measures could be politically irresistible.

In one sense, the threat is not limited solely to actual Soviet operations.¹ The specter of Soviet submarines could create an atmosphere of extreme anxiety along the coast even without Soviet deployments in the Eastern Pacific. During the Spanish-American War, Spanish ships never entered the waters off the east coast, but this possibility preoccupied the public until the main Spanish squadron was sunk in Cuban waters. In the event of a global war, the public mood is likely to be quite tense in the U.S. One prominent commentator, reminding the American public of the past Soviet proclivity for operating submarines off the U.S. coast, could create a public demand for stepped-up ASW activity even in the absence of a real threat. This demand could be translated into a political imperative for a more publicly visible (even if not particularly effective) ASW effort in coastal waters.

The scope and nature of any potential threat can be characterized by several different factors. Do the attacks occur only at sea (in coastal waters so that there is public knowledge of the events) or are they against land targets? Are the targets primarily "military" in nature or are overtly civilian targets being struck? When, in the war, does the attack occur? And, finally, is the attack limited to a single incident or does it appear to be part of a campaign over a wide expanse of territory? For example, a continuing Soviet campaign of conventional-SLCM strikes on major coastal cities, which cause significant civilian casualties, could create an atmosphere of hysteria among U.S. coastal region inhabitants. (The U.S. has never faced a situation where the enemy was causing large numbers of casualties ashore. Thus, this extreme case has no historical foundation on which to base an evaluation.) On the other hand, the sinking of just one minor merchant vessel well out of sight of land seems unlikely to create an atmosphere in which U.S. Navy force deployments would be determined by public hysteria rather than by military logic.

1. Only the future threat posed from the Soviet submarine operations is considered in this paper. Other potential wartime threats to CONUS exist that are not considered, such as the possibility of Cuban air or sea raids against the Atlantic or Gulf coasts or of a widespread terrorist threat in the midst of a Third-World conflict.

THE HISTORICAL EXPERIENCE

In all her wars from the Revolutionary War through World War II, the United States has faced some form of threat to her borders, coast, or coastal waters. Through these experiences, the U.S. response has differed -- both militarily and in the public perception of the threat. This section examines various episodes of threats to U.S. coastal regions over the past 130 years.

The most important question to examine is whether the military response to the perceived threat was in accordance with the military judgment of the time. If the response was disproportionately large, did non-military pressure force it? It is very difficult to determine cause and effect relationships between a public reaction to a threat and the military response to the threat. The following discussion of each episode considers the general nature of the threat, portrays the public reaction to that threat, and outlines the military response. Where the available evidence permits, it highlights the connections between the public response to the threat, the political imperatives placed upon the military leadership, and the possible effects on the resulting military response.

Several issues seem most important in this examination of the historical record. These include the civilian reaction to the threat, the state of coastal defenses as perceived by the military and the population at large, whether a strategic diversion of U.S. forces occurred, and the degree of unity among military decision-makers about how to respond. Key questions addressed include the following:

- **Civilian Reaction:** What effect did attacks or threats of attacks have on civilian morale? How did the political leadership respond to the public mood? Did the military or other parts of the government attempt to prevent or defuse negative public reactions to the threat? If so, how? What other factors accounted for the public perception of the situation?
- **Coastal Defense:** How did the existence and cognizance of coastal defense capabilities affect the public's perception of the threats to the coast? As well, how did the public's perception of threats affect the development of coastal defense? (This paper does not delve deeply into the question of coastal defense.)
- **Diversion:** Did threats against or attacks on U.S. territory or coastal waters serve to divert U.S. forces from the uses preferred by the military leadership? What consideration did military planners give to possible civilian reactions to hostile activity against CONUS?
- **Unity of Decision Making:** Did the military leadership have a common perception of the military dimensions and importance of the threat? If so, was this common agreement as to the severity of the threat successfully conveyed to the political leadership and to the public?

In examining the question of whether threats to a nation's homeland force a disproportionate response, the number of possible historical examples to examine is large. This examination is limited to the American historical experience and, more specifically, the U.S. experience with threats to the coast during the Civil War, Spanish-American War, World War I, and World War II. Prior to the Civil War, in the Revolutionary War and the War of 1812, the U.S. Navy faced the overwhelming naval power of Great Britain. From the Civil War on, the U.S. Navy was dominant or at least had the potential for fully contesting command of the sea close to the United States. These later experiences of the U.S. Navy seem most relevant to the question of what future reactions might be to a threat to the U.S. coast or coastal waters.

THE CIVIL WAR

During the Civil War, in the face of immense difficulties, the Confederate Government was able to mount a commerce raiding campaign with an assortment of ships. These ships raided shipping lanes worldwide and even had some success close off commercial centers on the Northern seaboard. Confederate privateers and raiders captured or destroyed nearly three hundred Union ships, with direct losses exceeding \$25 million and even greater indirect losses (through higher insurance costs, shipping of goods in neutral ships, and the reflagging of Union merchant ships to neutral flags).¹

In 1861, Confederate privateers enjoyed great success. On 17 April 1861, Jefferson Davis offered Southern ship owners letters of Marque, and, by early summer, the twenty such craft operating off the Atlantic coast had captured two dozen Northern ships.² The audacious nature of these operations created great hysteria among Northern ship owners. These ship owners and others concerned with maritime commerce placed great pressure upon the President and the Navy Department to divert ships from the blockade of the South to defend Northern harbors, patrol the coasts, guard fishing and shipping fleets, and to hunt the raiders. Secretary of the Navy Gideon Welles decided to concentrate on strengthening the blockade: "What is there to prevent the Confederates from maintaining and equipping their fast cruisers except the unwearied vigilance of the blockading fleet?"³ However, Welles' decision to concentrate the Navy's resources on the blockade was denounced as "pure madness." Editorials described Welles as "a man possessed," a "Rip Van Winkle snoozing" while the nation's seaborne trade expired.⁴ Yet Welles remained convinced that the blockade remained the answer to the privateering threat -- and he was proven correct in this belief. The transition from privateering to naval commerce raiding began as early as June 1861 with the sailing of the first Confederate Navy commerce raider, CSS *Sumter*. Privateers soon disappeared from the seas due both to losses to Union ships (several Confederate privateer crews were in jail by the fall of 1861) and their inability to safely get their prizes past the blockade.

The new threat that emerged in the Confederate Navy's raiders was, potentially, a more serious one. Once past the blockade, these ships did not require the ability to reenter southern ports, as the goal was not the capture of Northern shipping and trade, but its destruction. Thus, these raiders increased shipping interests' pressure on the government for the dispatch of Union ships to pursue the Confederate vessels. In 1863, there was a general panic along the eastern seaboard when it became general knowledge in the North that there were sea-going ironclads

1. Perhaps the most serious indirect cost was the damage done to the long-term health of the American merchant marine, whose continued decline can be traced from the Civil War. Due to Confederate activity, extra premiums for war risk rose to levels as high as 9 percent of insured value in 1863. Due to these high costs, large numbers of ships were registered under foreign flags. By mid-1864, according to one accounting, the U.S. merchant fleet had fallen from 5.2 to 1.7 million tons. Of the 3.5-million-ton reduction, just 110,000 was due to sinkings by Confederate raiders -- most of the reduction was due to transfers to foreign flags to avoid the high insurance rates. Following the war, the U.S. recovered a relatively small amount of this shipping primarily due to laws that greatly restricted a return to the flag of any ship that had given up U.S. registry. (See George W. Dalzell, *The Flight from the Flag: The Continuing Effect of the Civil War Upon the American Carrying Trade*, Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, 1940, pp. 237-262.) On the other side of the ledger, one estimate placed the direct value of vessels and cargo seized by Union blockade ships at \$30 million. (Adm. David D. Porter, USN, *The Naval History of the Civil War*, Secaucus, NJ, Castle Books, 1984, p. 18. This is a reprint of the 1886 original edition of the book. Porter was heavily involved in the riverine campaigns of the Civil War and, for example, commanded the Union Navy forces at the Battle of Vicksburg.)

2. James M. McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom*, New York, Oxford University Press, 1988, p. 315.

3. Porter, *Naval History of the Civil War*, p. 623.

4. As quoted in *The Civil War: The Blockade, Runners and Raiders*, Alexandria, VA, Time-Life Books, 1983, pp. 28-29.

building in England for the Confederates. Until the panic over the building iron-clads, there had not been great pressure for the deployment of ships off harbors along the New England coast, because most harbors already had some form of coastal fortification.

Welles continued to resist the pressure to dispatch Navy ships all over the globe until the Union Navy had built up enough strength so that sending ships on far-ranging missions would not weaken the blockade. The supreme Union military objective was the subjugation of the Confederacy, and the main Navy contribution to this goal was through the blockade of Southern ports and direct support to Army operations along the coasts and inland waterways. Any diversion from the blockading forces would be "strategically justified only on the ground of grave peril to some vital interest of the North."¹

A few commerce raiders did not constitute a "grave peril." Confederate privateers and raiders created additional costs and inconveniences but did not affect the core Union war effort, nor seriously threaten the Union's coast or flow of commerce. While, as the war progressed, more Union ships were on the high seas seeking Confederate raiders (leading to such confrontations as the famous 1864 engagement when USS *Kearsage* sunk CSS *Alabama* off the coast of France), this was a secondary effort. Thus, Welles maintained the Navy's prime focus on strengthening and maintaining the blockade throughout the Civil War, even in the face of great public demands for increased Navy protection of Union shipping.

THE SPANISH-AMERICAN WAR

At the beginning of the Spanish American-War, the public pressured the U.S. military to act in two contradictory directions. That the army land in Cuba as soon as possible was the first demand -- in a highly jingoistic atmosphere, the public wanted the Spanish "rape" of the Cuban people to be ended forthwith.

The second public demand was for forces (primarily naval) to be assigned to protect the Atlantic coast from possible raids by the Spanish fleet. In light of the potential threat from the Spanish fleet, army operations would wait for resolution of the situation at sea or would depend upon the Navy for escort protection. Rather than devoting the fleet to the blockade of Cuba and deploying it in the best position to intercept Spanish naval movements crossing the Atlantic, the Navy was forced to divert ships to patrol the coast in response to the public fears. Prior to the war, the Navy Department had directed "the preparation of a scheme for a 'mosquito flotilla' for coast defense" and "this auxiliary naval force finally composed forty-one vessels, distributed so as to protect important strategic points of the United States." This, however, was not enough to "allay the unwarranted terror felt by the inhabitants of the coast towns."² Perhaps the greatest threat, then, that the U.S. Navy faced was not opposition by the Spanish at sea but interference with their operations from their own shores.

Politicians, reacting to the public hysteria, placed great pressure upon the Navy to provide protection for virtually every part of the eastern seaboard. Theodore Roosevelt, Assistant Secretary of the Navy at the start of the war, later summed up the situation as follows:

[A] fairly comic panic ... swept in waves over our seacoast... The state of nervousness along much of the seacoast was funny in view of the lack of foundation for it. ... The Governor of one State actually announced that he would not permit the National Guard of that State to leave its borders, the idea being to

1. Harold and Margaret Sprout, *The Rise of American Naval Power, 1776-1918*, Annapolis, Maryland, Naval Institute Press, 1966, p. 162-164.

2. John D. Long (Secretary of the Navy 1897-1902), *The New American Navy*, vol. 1, New York, The Outlook Company, 1903, pp. 160, 208.

retain it against a possible Spanish invasion. So many of the businessmen of the city of Boston took their securities inland to Worcester that the safe deposit companies of Worcester proved unable to take care of them. ... on Long Island clauses were gravely put into leases that if the property were destroyed by the Spaniards the lease should lapse. As Assistant Secretary of the Navy, I had every inconceivable request made to me. ... Congressmen ... Chambers of Commerce and Boards of Trade of different coast cities all lost their heads for the time being, and raised a deafening clamor and brought every species of pressure to bear on the Administration ... to distribute the navy, ship by ship, at all kinds of ports with the idea of protecting everything everywhere.¹

A Georgia congressman wanted a ship to protect Jekyll Island, according to Roosevelt,

because it contained the winter homes of certain millionaires. A lady whose husband occupied a very influential position ... came to insist that a ship should be anchored off a huge sea-side hotel because she had a house in the neighborhood.²

The Navy sought to resist such pressures, for in essence, the Navy leadership understood the true weakness of the Spanish fleet and they desired not to divide the battle forces in light of what was viewed to be a very unlikely threat. However, the public perception of the threat was not influenced by the Navy's threat evaluation. Instead, the public heard from European (and some American) commentators who greatly magnified the capabilities of the Spanish fleet and disparaged the capabilities of the U.S. Navy.³ The Spanish Navy's view of its own capabilities demonstrates the true extent of the feared threat. Adm. Pascual Cervera y Topete, the commander of the Spanish fleet, feared that the American Navy would seize the Canary islands and would operate against shipping off the Spanish coast. He called for retaining the Spanish Navy in home waters, rather than steaming out "like Don Quixote ... to fight windmills and come back with broken heads."⁴ Cervera considered any thought of attempting action off the U.S. coast as "a dream, almost a feverish fancy. ... A campaign against that country will have to be ... a defensive one or a disastrous one."⁵ However, the Spanish Minister of Marine ignored Cervera's opinions and ordered the fleet to cross the ocean.

While the U.S. Navy was able, to some extent, to "avoid frittering away our naval strength by assignment of vessels before every port of the Atlantic and Gulf coasts," substantial diversions still occurred. As Secretary of the Navy John D. Long later wrote:

Apologies are profuse now for the fears of Spanish bombardment entertained by certain coast cities and towns, but in April 1898 there was insistent demand for

1. Theodore Roosevelt, *An Autobiography*, New York, The MacMillan Company, 1913, pp. 220-221.

2. Roosevelt, *Autobiography*, p. 221.

3. The absurdities of some of these commentaries are impressive. Many commentators called the U.S. Navy a mercenary navy, with too many foreign sailors (i.e., immigrants) who would be unwilling to risk their lives in battle. Commentators of this ilk thus discounted the physical capabilities of the U.S. Navy's vessels, believing that their crews would desert at the earliest opportunity if war seemed likely to occur. At the same time, these commentators added into calculations Spanish ships that were not yet in the fleet, ships that were obsolete and used for training, and ignored significant readiness problems. This last factor was also one the U.S. Navy was unaware of. See F.E. Chadwick, *The Relations of the United States and Spain: The Spanish-American War*, vol. 1, New York, Scribner's Sons, 1911, pp. 28-46.

4. As quoted in: David F. Trask, *The War with Spain in 1898*, New York, Macmillan, 1981, p. 65.

5. Letter of Adm. Cervera to the Spanish Minister of Marine, 16 February 1898. As quoted in Chadwick, *Relations of the United States and Spain*, p. 99. For a discussion of the Spanish naval strategy debate, see Chadwick, pp. 94-126.

protection, and the department was compelled to modify the rule of concentration as the guide of its conduct during the war.¹

Thus, the main Atlantic fleet was divided in two, with the "Flying Squadron" deployed at Hampton Roads rather than Key West with the rest of the fleet in order to cover the east coast from the Spanish threat.² In mid-May, powerful elements of the squadron, including the protected cruisers USS *Columbia* and USS *Minneapolis*, were detached to form the "Northern Patrol Squadron" to cruise the waters between Rhode Island and Maine. These ships called at different ports to reassure the local inhabitants, who were terrified by "the specter of Adm. Cervera."³

The "specter of Adm. Cervera" was not simply a civilian fear, however. Troop movements from New York to Florida were made by rail rather than sea "because the fleet of the Spanish Navy...was abroad somewhere on the high seas, location unknown."⁴ And as long as Cervera's location remained unknown, the Atlantic fleet remained in two distinct forces: the first blockading Cuba, and the Flying Squadron guarding against a possible Spanish descent on the east coast.

The Spanish Navy's greatest value was as a fleet-in-being -- its ability to restrict the U.S. Navy's operations simply through its existence. The Spanish government sacrificed this role when it ordered Cervera's ill-prepared and outnumbered squadron across the Atlantic. As soon as Cervera's squadron was discovered in the Caribbean, the U.S. fleet was able to concentrate against it and destroy it.

Following the war, the problems of preventing such a public outcry in a future conflict were examined. Following Mahan's logic in his analysis of the war,⁵ which stressed a means for visibly reassuring the public, a much greater investment in harbor and seacoast defense in the United States was one of the legacies of the war. Speaking at the Naval War College in 1908, Roosevelt said:

Let the port be protected by the [Army's] fortifications; the fleet must be foot-loose to search out and destroy the enemy's fleet; that is the function of the fleet; that is the only function that can justify the fleet's existence. ... For the protection of our

1. Long, *New American Navy*, pp. 206, 208. The Navy Department's efforts to avoid significant diversions were sometimes less than candid with the President. For example, in his autobiography Roosevelt writes of the instance that "stood above the others. A certain seaboard State contained in its Congressional delegation one of the most influential men in the Senate and ... in the lower house. These two men had been worse than lukewarm about building up the navy, and had scoffed at the idea of there ever being any danger from any foreign power. With the advent of war the feelings of their constituents, and therefore their own feelings, suffered an immediate change, and they demanded that a ship be anchored in the harbor of their city as a protection. Getting no comfort from me, they went "higher up" and became a kind of permanent committee in attendance upon the President. ... Finally the President gave in and notified me to see that a ship was sent to the city in question. I was bound that, as long as a ship had to be sent, it should not be a ship worth anything. Accordingly a Civil War Monitor, with one smooth-bore gun ... was sent to the city in question, under convoy of a tug. It was a hazardous trip for the unfortunate naval militiamen, but it was safely accomplished; and joy and peace descended upon the Senator and the Congressman, and upon the President whom they had jointly harassed. Incidentally, the fact that the protecting war-vessel would not have been a formidable foe to any antagonist of much more modern construction than the galleys of Alcibiades seemed to disturb nobody." Roosevelt, *Autobiography*, p. 221.

2. Trask, *War with Spain*, p. 87.

3. G.J.A. O'Toole, *The Spanish-American War: An American Epic -- 1898*, New York, W.W. Norton & Co., 1984, p. 209.

4. As quoted in: O'Toole, *Spanish-American War*, New York, p. 210. That Army transports might be intercepted at sea was considered a viable possibility, thus railroads were used rather than allowing transports to sail unescorted.

5. A.T. Mahan, *Lessons of the War with Spain*, Boston, Little, Brown & Co., 1899.

coasts we need fortifications; not merely to protect the salient points of our possessions, but we need them so that the Navy can be foot-loose.¹

The existence of powerful, coastal fortifications served the Navy's interests in more than one way. These fortifications would protect Navy bases from seaborne attack (which, of course, was a central Navy concern). Less directly, but perhaps more saliently in light of the Spanish-American war experience, strong defenses along the coast, according to this logic, would provide a strong sense of security to the public. This, it was thought, would do much to avert the kind of public panic which threatened to fragment the fleet at the beginning of the conflict.

Some military commentators disagreed with this approach. They suggested that the least expensive option would be to educate the public as to the low threat against the U.S. coastlines and the proper role of a navy.² One study pointed out "that at every important point our fixed defenses were more than strong enough to drive off the Spanish fleet. ... That there was panic among the denizens of our Atlantic States is a fact, but this panic was not justified by the paucity of our coast-defenses. ... Our brethren of the army had done their work too well and no such paucity existed." The chosen policy, it was argued, had "started on the road" that would bring "a continuous battery from Maine to Texas ..." and that the coastal defense policy's real effect was to "weaken the public confidence in our true coast-defense -- the sea-going fleet." It was argued that "*the most important lesson of the war ... is the danger that uninstructed public opinion may usurp the direction of naval policy.* [emphasis added]"³

WORLD WAR I

At the beginning of America's involvement in World War I, two months after the German resumption of unrestricted submarine warfare on 1 February 1917, a debate over the proper role of the U.S. fleet occurred between various parts of the naval leadership. Simply put, RAdm. William S. Sims, commander of U.S. Navy Forces Operating in European Waters, believed that the United States should move its forces, especially escort and mining forces, to English waters as rapidly as possible. Sims believed that the greatest threat facing the Allies, and thus the U.S., was the German submarine campaign against shipping in the Eastern Atlantic. The Secretary of the Navy, Josephus Daniels, and Chief of Naval Operations, Adm. William S. Benson, believed that the main elements of the fleet, including most ships suitable for convoy escort operations, should remain in the Western Atlantic to protect the U.S. coast against a threat from German submarines and, potentially, Germany's High Seas Fleet. In addition, some officers feared that deploying the fleet overseas would risk it at the far end of an uncertain supply line (in light of the U-boat threat). An additional element of this discussion focused on the substantial ongoing naval shipbuilding program. Sims argued that the building of capital ships should be halted so that the ship yards could concentrate on construction that would aid in the antisubmarine war. Benson, on the other hand, believed that this would put at risk long-term U.S. interests, especially in the event of a British collapse and a concentration of the German, Japanese, and, potentially, surrendered British navies against the U.S. coast. This debate waxed and waned, but after several months President Wilson made the decision to focus on escort operations in the Eastern Atlantic.⁴

1. As quoted in: Emanuel Raymond Lewis, *Seacoast Fortifications of the United States*, Annapolis, Maryland, Leeward Publications, 1979, p. 99.

2. See Sprout, *Rise of American Naval Power*, Annapolis, p. 236.

3. Captain Caspar F. Goodrich (USN), "Some Points in Coast-Defense Brought Out By the War with Spain," *USNI Proceedings*, n. 2, (1901): pp. 231, 234.

4. For a discussion of the internal U.S. debate over the use of naval forces in the war effort, see David F. Trask, *Captains and Cabinets: Anglo-American Naval Relations, 1917-1918*, Columbia, Missouri, University of Missouri Press, 1972.

The ability of German submarines to operate in the Western Atlantic had been demonstrated before the U.S. entry into the war. In 1916, two German submarines crossed the Atlantic and raised the specter that the U.S. coast might be vulnerable to German submarines. (U-boats did not start actual war patrols off the coast until a year after the U.S. entry into the war. See table 1.) One of these U-boats, *Deutschland*, an unarmed "mercantile" submarine, ran the Allied blockade and entered east coast ports twice that year.¹ The other, U-53, made a one-day courtesy port call in Newport on 7 October 1916 following a rough trans-Atlantic passage. The U-53 was tasked with attacking Royal Navy ships (which it did not encounter) that were patrolling for *Deutschland*. The day following the port call, U-53 attacked and sank five non-U.S. merchant ships in international waters off the U.S. coast.

Table 1. German Submarine Operations in the Western Atlantic During World War I

Name/Number	Left Germany	Arrived off Coast	Left Atlantic Coast	Arrived Germany
<i>Deutschland</i>	14 June 1916	9 July	1 August	23 August
U-53	20 Sept 1916	7 October	7 October	1 November
<i>Deutschland</i>	10 Oct 1916	1 November	21 November	10 December
U-151	14 Apr 1918	15 May	1 July	1 August
U-156	15 Jun 1918	5 July	1 September	Struck North Sea Mine, sunk 25 October
U-140	22 June 1918	14 July		Mid-October
U-117	July 1918	8 August		15 November
U-155a	Early Aug 1918	7 September	20 October	
U-152	Late Aug 1918	29 September		
U-139	Early Sept 1918	while assigned to do so, did not operate off U.S. coast		

a) Formerly the *Deutschland*.

Source: "German Submarine Activities on the Atlantic Coast of the United States and Canada," Navy Department, Office of Naval Records and Library, Historical Section, Publication Number 1, Washington, DC, GPO, 1920, p. 7.

The public reaction to these five sinkings was enormous. A significant stock market fall and a jump in shipping insurance rates followed the U-53 attacks. RAdm. Bradley A. Fiske warned that "U-53 has shown us how accessible our shores are to Europe. ... If U-53 got as far as the vicinity of Newport undetected, she could have gone into the harbor itself undetected, and could have sunk one or more of our battleships without our even knowing the cause of their sinking. ... If one submarine could come across, a fleet could do the same." Fiske argued that, in

1. After avoiding Royal Navy ships sent to intercept her, the *Deutschland* arrived in Baltimore, MD, on 9 July 1916 with a cargo of dyes, mail, and precious stones. The *Deutschland* was unarmed; and, after inspection, it was recognized as a merchant-vessel by the U.S. government. On 2 August, she departed for Bremen (arrived 24 August) with a cargo of zinc, copper, and nickel. The second voyage occurred in October/November, when the *Deutschland* visited New London. A second mercantile submarine, the *Bremen*, also sailed for the U.S., but it never arrived. Following her second voyage, the Germans modified *Deutschland* and her sister ships (there were a total of seven built or building, plus two long-range submarines designed from the keel up as war vessels) to carry torpedoes. (See: R.H. Gibson and Maurice Prendergast, *The German Submarine War*, London, Constable & Co., 1931, pp. 103-104, 111; Edwyn Gray, *The Killing Time*, New York, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1972, pp. 150-151, 225; and Dwight R. Messimer, *The Merchant U-Boat*, Annapolis, Naval Institute Press, 1988.)

case of war, the U.S. fleet would be required to stay on the east coast to prevent the imposition of a blockade.¹

Public (and military) fears were not limited to a submarine campaign. One popular work of the war years prior to the U.S. entry into the war, *America Fallen*, postulated a German invasion of the United States following a negotiated settlement in Europe in 1916.² While somewhat far-fetched, this scenario was not totally unrelated to scenarios that had been examined in more serious fora. In the early 1890s, following German-American tension over Samoa, the German admiralty began to examine options for a conflict against the U.S. An 1899 plan called for a surprise assault on New York, while a January 1902 plan called for the seizure of Puerto Rico as an operating base for operations against the U.S. coast.³

In 1903, *Proceedings* republished with commentary an article from *Scientific American* on the path of a naval war between Germany and the U.S. as it had unfolded during one war game society's utilization of the "Jane Naval War Game." While the game ended in the U.S. side "winning," victory came at the cost of 60 percent of U.S. commerce, the destruction of 40 percent of U.S. coastal property and the weakening of the U.S. Navy.⁴ While these may have been considered unlikely scenarios, that the Germans might be capable of exerting force directly against the United States was of concern to the U.S. military leadership. In fact, the primary U.S. Navy planning for a war against Germany, Plan Black, focused on the probability of a major naval engagement on the high seas between the two nations' fleets.⁵

Thus, at the beginning of the war, these prewar concerns and the fears elucidated by Fiske and others were paramount in the thinking of many in the Navy Department. Sims, secretly sent to England just prior to the U.S. entry into the war, called for an immediate and total U.S. commitment to the ASW battle in the convoy approaches in the Eastern Atlantic because Britain seemed to be on the verge of being forced out of the war as a result of the merchant shipping losses to German submarines. And, with longer lasting implications, Sims argued that the entire U.S. shipbuilding effort should be focused on two types of shipping -- destroyers and other ASW-capable vessels, and merchant ships to replace the heavy allied losses -- and that the substantial U.S. production of major fleet units should be halted for the duration of the ASW emergency.

1. Rear Adm. B.A. Fiske (USN), "What the Visit of the U-53 Portends to the United States," *USNI Proceedings*, n. 6, 1916, pp. 2038-2039. At the time of the U-53 visit to Newport, Fiske was finishing his last tour of duty with an assignment to the Naval War College.

2. The book outlines this scenario: Germany negotiates peace with a large indemnity (\$15 billion) to Britain and France, but does not destroy any forces. Germany purchases St. Thomas from Denmark and deploys her fleet to the Caribbean. On 1 April, the day after the U.S. learns of the St. Thomas purchase, German troops land in Boston and New York, and the German Navy cripples the U.S. Navy through a surprise attack. Within a month, the U.S. is forced to accept a \$20 billion indemnity -- thus Germany earns a \$5 billion profit between the two conflicts. J. Bernard Walker, *America Fallen*, New York, Dodd, Mead & Co., 1915. One military reviewer wrote that "The author has made use of accurate information regarding our land forces to draw a vivid picture of possible consequences of our present unpreparedness for national defense. ... The tragic events recited are supposed to take place on April 1, but granting only the element of surprise, there is no reason why they should not take place on any other day of the year." *Infantry Journal*, vol. XII, July-August 1915, pp. 163-165.

3. This somewhat fantasy planning essentially ceased in 1906 as the Admiralty Staff increasingly turned its attention to questions of a European conflict. See Carl-Axel Gemzell, *Lund Studies in International History 4: Organization, Conflict, and Innovation: A Study of German Naval Strategic Planning, 1888-1940*, Stockholm, Esselte Studium, 1973, pp. 70-73.

4. See: Fred T. Jane, "The Naval Wargame," pp. 595-660, and LtCdr A.P. Niblack, USN, "The Jane Naval War Game in the *Scientific American*," pp. 581-593, *USNI Proceedings*, n. 107, September 1903.

5. Clay Blair, Jr., *Silent Victory: The U.S. Submarine War against Japan*, vol. 1, Philadelphia, J.B. Lippincott, 1974, pp. 21-22.

Benson and Daniels, on the other hand, believed that a threat existed against the U.S. coast that required keeping the fleet in reserve. They perceived a multidimensional threat that was not limited to the German submarine fleet (and Sims' assertions that Great Britain was near collapse strengthened their concern that the German High Seas Fleet would threaten the U.S. directly when Britain fell). They also looked with concern at the Japanese in the Pacific (following a 1912-1913 war scare in the Pacific) and at the possibility of a U.S.-U.K. confrontation following the war. The fear that the Allies might collapse (leaving the U.S. to face Germany and, perhaps, Japan alone) and the desire to achieve the shipbuilding goal of acquiring a Navy second to none both encouraged hesitation over modifications in the shipbuilding program. On 20 April 1917, the Navy's General Board met and presented its views on the question of whether to continue the capital ship building program. The Board thought it necessary to consider not only the present emergency but also the possibility of "a war resulting from the present one in which the United States may be confronted by Germany and Japan operating conjointly in the Atlantic and Pacific; it is also possible that we may have to meet these two powerful navies without allies to restrict the operations of the German fleet."¹ Thus, Sims' requests for the rapid deployment of Navy assets to the British Isles and the realignment of U.S. shipbuilding efforts faced great resistance in Washington.

Despite the debates, however, the Navy was the only service prepared to make an immediate contribution to the war effort and it quickly started deploying forces to England. On 4 May 1917, the first flotilla of six destroyers reached the Irish coast. By 1 July, 28 of the 52 available U.S. destroyers were on station in Europe. At this point, deployments to England slowed. The Navy Department withheld dispatch of the remaining destroyers for a variety of reasons. While some were in need of repair, the primary concerns were hesitation over further dividing the battle fleet and demands for destroyers for patrols along the east coast.² Sims vociferously argued for the deployment of all available ships to the Eastern Atlantic.

For months, the Navy Department and Sims battled via trans-Atlantic cable. President Wilson finally resolved the issue by supporting Sims' emphasis on the protection of merchant shipping in the area of the British Isles³ and, therefore, in favor of a shipbuilding program that emphasized vessels for the submarine war over continued expansion of the main battle line. This was never wholeheartedly adopted as Navy policy and while, at the height of the effort, some 370 ships were in Eastern Atlantic or Mediterranean waters, this was out of a total of over 1,500 Navy units and included less than 15 percent of Navy personnel.⁴ Adm. Benson stated his war priorities in this manner:

1. Trask, *Captains and Cabinets*, p. 102.

2. Trask, *Captains and Cabinets*, p. 77.

3. As early as late summer 1917, as convoying eased the submarine crisis, the debate shifted to whether the USN should concentrate on protecting shipping to England or on protecting U.S. troop transports. As Captain William V. Pratt (USN) wrote, "The impelling reason of the British was protection to food and war supplies in transit. Our basic reason was protection to our own military forces in crossing the seas. ... The most important future cross water operations" were those that would ensure "safe transportation of American troops to French soil." On this issue, Sims did not have his way, and the USN emphasis was placed upon safely transporting the U.S. Army to France. See: Mary Klachko, *Admiral William Shepherd Benson: First Chief of Naval Operations*, Annapolis, Naval Institute Press, 1987, p. 70-71; and, Dean C. Allard, "Anglo-American Naval Differences During World War I," *Military Affairs*, vol. XLIV, n. 2, April 1980, pp. 76-77.

4. Elting E. Morison, *Admiral Sims and the Modern American Navy*, New York, Russell & Russell, 1942, p. 369. The personnel figure is potentially misleading. The percentage of the Navy's manpower in training camps, assigned to transports and cargo ships carrying troops to Europe, and manning the fleet's battleships (few of which were deployed to the Eastern Atlantic) must have been enormous.

My first thought in the beginning, during, and always, was to see first that our coasts and our own vessels and our own interests were safeguarded. Then ... to give everything we had ... for the common cause.¹

In May 1918, the long-dreaded U-boat activity in the Western Atlantic began as U-151, the first of seven U-boats to operate off the east coast, arrived in its area of operations.² This submarine, a converted mercantile submarine, cut telegraph cables, laid mines, and attacked shipping both on the surface (with gunfire, and by boarding and sinking with demolitions) and submerged (with torpedoes). After U-151's minefields, laid off Baltimore, "claimed their first victims ... a wild panic ensued on shore. German U-boats were reported everywhere, ships were hurriedly recalled to harbor by their owners, freight rates began to rise, and marine insurance premiums soared."³ The other U-boats to operate off the U.S. coast used the same techniques. An unusual twist was added near the end of August. A fishing boat, *Triumph*, was captured and used to attack other fishing boats near the Grand Banks.⁴

U-151's activities and those of the six other U-boats that deployed to the Western Atlantic came with very accurate prior warning from Adm. Sims in England, who erred, for example, by one day as to the arrival of U-151 off the east coast.⁵ Sims was well aware of the potential psychological dangers of the coming U-boat campaign and feared that undue pressure would be brought to bear to keep antisubmarine ships on the east coast.

There is no doubt in our minds over here, that what [the enemy] seeks to do is to produce a moral and political effect, and that as the result of these effects, he can induce the Allies to disintegrate their [anti]submarine forces.

For example, if by sending one submarine to America to plant the few mines he can carry, or to sink the few ships that he can sink, he can through the influence of his presence upon public opinion, force our Government to keep a large number of destroyers on the other side or in any service not connected with the real anti-submarine campaign, he will have succeeded admirably in his objective.

Of course I understand something about the effect of public opinion, but this public opinion must necessarily be an ignorant opinion viewed from a military standpoint. It would therefore seem that it was up to us to instruct this opinion so as to prevent the effect the enemy wishes to produce... This should not be difficult, as the question [explaining the purpose of the cruising submarines to the public] is one of marked simplicity.⁶

The seven German U-boats had great success. With the loss of just one submarine, over 150,000 tons of shipping were sunk in the Western Atlantic. Losses included the sinking of USS *San Diego*, an armored cruiser, and damage to the battleship USS *Minnesota*. Large numbers of

1. As quoted in Allard, "Anglo-American Naval Differences," *Military Affairs*, pp. 75-76.

2. For a discussion of the German debate over whether or not to operate submarines off the U.S. coast, see: Holger H. Herwig and David F. Trask, "The Failure of Imperial Germany's Undersea Offensive Against World Shipping, February 1917 - October 1918," *The Historian*, vol. XXXIII, n. 4, August 1971, pp. 613, 617-623, 626. The Kaiser hesitated over deploying submarines to the Western Atlantic, hoping to avoid arousing "the less militant regions of the United States" and, thus, that pacifist elements in the United States might weaken the U.S. war effort.

3. Gray, *Killing Time*, p. 234.

4. Gibson and Prendergast, *German Submarine War*, pp. 309-310. The *Triumph*, as a German corsair, was responsible for the sinking of at least ten fishing vessels in the last weeks of August.

5. Gibson and Prendergast, *German Submarine War*, pp. 306-307.

6. Adm. W.S. Sims cable to Secretary of the Navy Benson, 17 May 1918. As quoted in Morison, *Admiral Sims and the Modern American Navy*, p. 411; and Trask, *Captains and Cabinets*, pp. 219-220.

U.S. Navy ships were active in the Western Atlantic to deal with this seven-submarine threat. In terms of the U.S. capability to wage war, however, the U-boat campaign itself had little effect. Just one ship involved in convoy operations was sunk, the British steamer *Dvinsk*, which was empty en route to Newport News for troops.¹ The Navy Department's postwar study of the submarine offensive concluded that:

The German campaign, by means of submarines on the Atlantic coast of the United States, so far as concerned the major operations of the war, was a failure. Every transport and cargo vessel bound for Europe sailed as if no such campaign was in progress. All coastwise shipping sailed as per schedule, a little more care in routing vessels being observed. There was no interruption to the coast patrol which, on the contrary, became more active. The small vessels ... scoured the coast regardless of the fact that the enemy submarines were equipped with ordnance very much heavier than their own. There was no stampede on the Atlantic coast; no excitement; everything went on in the usual calm way and, above all, this enemy expedition off the Atlantic coast did not succeed in retaining on the Atlantic coast any vessels that had been designated for duty in European waters.²

It is true that the German submarine campaign off the east coast did not force a redeployment of U.S. Navy assets from Europe back to the U.S. However, prior to the U-boats' arrival, the fears of such a campaign had already contributed to the Navy's restraint for the year that the U.S. had been in the war. While the restriction on the U.S. Navy's activities and hesitation in modifying its building program reflected concerns in much of the populace, it resulted from a debate and concerns within the Navy itself rather than pressure from the civilian community. In examining the record, it is difficult to separate the military decision process from the atmosphere in which the decisions were made. It seems, however, that the debate over how best to utilize the Navy and what force to construct for the war centered on differing naval perspectives of the war and its imperatives rather than from undue or uninformed pressure on the Navy's leadership.

WORLD WAR II

During World War II, there were a number of threats to the U.S. coast and/or coastal waters that are relevant to the current research. These range from the significant German U-boat operations off the east and Gulf Coasts starting in January 1942 to the Japanese balloon-bombing campaign late in the war. Some of the incidents examined were not "real," but only perceived threats, such as the battle against Group *Seewolf* in April 1945, when it was feared that the Germans were attempting to use U-boats for launching rocket attacks against east coast cities. This section examines a number of these World War II experiences.

Reaction to Pearl Harbor

Following Pearl Harbor, the nation was shell-shocked:

No American who lived through that Sunday will ever forget it. It seared deeply into the national consciousness, shearing away illusions that had been fostered for generations. And with the first shock came a sort of panic. This struck our deepest

1. Gibson and Prendergast, *German Submarine War*, pp. 307.

2. "German Submarine Activities on the Atlantic Coast of the United States and Canada," Navy Department, Office of Naval Records and Library, Historical Section, Publication Number 1, Washington, DC, GPO, 1920, p. 141. The Navy Department's official assessment that "everything went on in the usual calm way" seems too positive, however, the most important point of this quote is correct: no disruption occurred in convoys to Europe.

pride. It tore at the myth of our invulnerability. Striking at the precious legend of our might, it seemed to leave us suddenly naked and defenseless."¹

There were great fears not only among the public, but in the military as well, that the west coast would suffer from Japanese follow-up raids. Thus, the early months of the war saw frantic efforts to secure the west coast from any such Japanese efforts and, perhaps surprisingly, the east coast from any similar German act.

In an address to the nation, President Roosevelt stressed that the initial attack could be repeated "at any one of many points in both oceans and along our coast lines and against the rest of the hemisphere." The terrible lesson of Pearl Harbor should be clear to every citizen, "that our ocean-girt hemisphere is not immune from severe attack... We cannot measure our safety in terms of miles on any map."² RAdm. Clark H. Woodward (ret.) suggested in a news commentary that the Japanese or their allies would probably make sporadic "hit and run" attacks against the U.S. to terrorize the population and to break morale. He warned that the nation should be prepared for "an unannounced air raid on some coastal town or industrial center at most any time -- now that we have enemies across both oceans."³ Fiorello LaGuardia, Mayor of New York City and national Civil Defense chairman, warned that "the war will come right to our cities and residential districts..."⁴ Such commentaries fueled fears of further air attacks. Rumors and scares occurred on both coasts, but were particularly rampant on the Pacific coast.

Shortly after the Pearl Harbor attack, the captain of USS *Fox* (one of five WWI-era destroyers that were the primary U.S. Navy ships in the Northwest Sea Frontier) received a report that 24 enemy vessels were approaching the coast off Monterey.⁵ On 8 December, an enemy air raid was reported 100 miles west of San Francisco; Army planes claimed they fired on one of the two reported Japanese formations; and contact was made with and depth charges dropped on "submarines" in San Francisco Bay. Lt. Gen. John L. DeWitt, commander of the Western Frontier, countered any thoughts area citizens might have had that the Army was playing games to motivate them to practice their blackouts:

There are more damned fools in this locality than I have ever seen. Death and destruction are likely to come to this city at any moment. These planes were over our community for a definite period. They were enemy planes. I mean Japanese planes. They were tracked out to sea. Why bombs were not dropped, I do not know. It might have been better if some bombs had dropped to awaken the city.⁶

In fact, there were no Japanese planes in the area. Two days later, San Diego was blacked out when an air raid was reported.⁷ On December 9, OPNAV warned Adm. Kimmel in Hawaii that:

1. Marquis Childs, *I Write from Washington*, New York, Harcourt, Brace, & Co., 1942, p. 241.

2. Roosevelt 9 December 1941 radio address as quoted in: William A. Goss, "Air Defense of the Western Hemisphere," Chapter 8 in *The Army Air Forces in World War II, vol. 1: Plans and Early Operations, January 1939 - August 1942*, Wesley Frank Craven and James Lea Cate, editors, Office of Air Force History, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1948, p. 272.

3. Woodward 19 December 1941 commentary as quoted in: Martin V. Melosi, *The Shadow of Pearl Harbor*, College Station, Texas, Texas A & M Press, 1977, p. 4. Woodward had retired from the Navy just prior to the start of the war.

4. LaGuardia December 1941 statement as quoted in: Richard R. Lingeman, *Don't you know there's a war on? The American Home Front, 1941-1945*, New York, G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1970, p. 35.

5. Grahame F. Shrader, *The Phantom War in the Northwest, 1941-1942*, self-published, 1969, p. 5.

6. Lingeman, *Don't you know there's a war on?* p. 25.

7. *USN Administration in World War II, vol. 1, 163(a), Commander, Western Sea Frontier*, 1945, p. 32.

Because of the great success of the Japanese raid on the seventh it is expected to be promptly followed up by additional attacks in order [to] render Hawaii untenable as a naval and air base in which eventuality it is believed [that the] Japanese have forces suitable for [the] initial occupation of islands other than Oahu, including Midway, Maui, and Hawaii. ...

Until defenses are increased it is doubtful if Pearl should be used as a base for any except patrol craft, naval aircraft, submarines or for short periods when it is reasonably certain Japanese attacks will not be made.¹

Reinforcing west coast defenses was one of the greatest priorities in the Department of War following the Pearl Harbor attack. The U.S. had relied upon Hawaii and the fleet to provide a barrier to any serious threat to the west coast. On 9 December, Stimson reported to Roosevelt that "the present attack has left the West Coast unprotected."² The official threat assessment categorized submarine operations off the coast as "highly probable" and stated that air raids could be expected against west coast targets.³ West coast air defense reinforcement was rapid; the first elements of a pursuit group from Michigan began to arrive in the Los Angeles area on the 8th. By 17 December, nine additional anti-aircraft regiments had arrived on the west coast.⁴

While Japanese troop assaults against the west coast were considered unlikely, significant forces were deployed to face this potential "invasion" threat. The 218th Field Artillery, which had departed two weeks before the war from Fort Lewis, Washington, for the Philippines was 1,000 miles out to sea on 7 December. It was quickly ordered to return to reinforce coastal defenses. Within a week after Pearl Harbor, the 21,000 troops of the 41st division were "thinly scattered along the Washington coast from the Canadian border to the Columbia River and beyond in anticipation of an invasion."⁵ By the end of December, two additional divisions and many other smaller units were deployed to the west coast.⁶

Secretary of War Stimson became frustrated with what he viewed as a Navy overemphasis and preoccupation with the securing of Hawaii and the west coast at the beginning of the war. Regarding opposition to options for relieving the Philippines, Stimson wrote in his diary:

We have met with many obstacles, particularly because the Navy has been rather shaken and panic stricken after the catastrophe at Hawaii and the complete upset of their naval strategy which depended upon that fortress. They have been willing to think of nothing except Hawaii and the restoration of the defense of that Island. They have opposed all our efforts for a counter-attack, taking the defeatist attitude that it was impossible before we even tried.⁷

1. As quoted in: Gordon W. Prange, *At Dawn We Slept, The Untold Story of Pearl Harbor*, New York, McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1981, p. 585.

2. Goss, "Air Defense of the Western Hemisphere," *Army Air Forces in WWII*, p. 272.

3. "The category of defense for the Northwest Sea Frontier except UNALASKA, has been designated as 'Category C'; UNALASKA as 'Category D'. 'Category C' is a category of defense based on the assumption that the sea frontier will be subject to minor attack. 'Category D' is a category of defense based on the assumption that the area defined may be subject to major attack. Enemy submarine attacks on shipping in the coast waters of the Northwest Sea Frontier are highly probable. Enemy air attacks from carriers may be made upon military objectives and important industrial areas. Attempts at sabotage and sabotage activities may be expected." Headquarters, Northwest Sea Frontier, Seattle, Washington, 12 December 1941 Operation Order, Paragraph 1.

4. Byron Fairchild, ed., *The United States Army in World War II: The Western Hemisphere*, vol. 2: *Guarding the United States and its Outposts*, Stetson, Conn, 1964, p. 83.

5. Shrader, *Phantom War in the Northwest*, p. 7-8.

6. Fairchild, ed., *United States Army in World War II: The Western Hemisphere*, p. 83.

7. 14 December 1941 Stimson diary entry as quoted in: Prange, *At Dawn We Slept*, p. 585.

In the days following Pearl Harbor, military assets were diverted to coastal defense from what, in a calmer environment, would have been the preferred usage. However, it is unclear that such diversions occurred due to public pressure on the military for added defense against a threat. The result of surprise in war can be panic, and in the case of Pearl Harbor both the military and civilian world suffered from the surprise. Indeed, a sense of panic and shock pervaded the military as it did the civilian world, and thus, as always in such a situation, rationality might not have held sway in the decision-making process.

Japanese I-Boat Operations Off the West Coast

The Japanese deployed several submarines to the eastern Pacific prior to the Pearl Harbor attack. On 5 November, the Japanese Navy had directed its "Sixth Submarine Fleet", which included only first-class submarines, to "make reconnaissance of the American Fleet in Hawaii and west coast area, and, by surprise attacks on shipping, destroy lines of communication."¹ Within moments of the start of the raid on the fleet, the first I-boat blow was struck as I-26 sunk SS *Cynthia Olson*, a 2,140-ton lumber freighter, 1,000 miles northeast of Hawaii. (See table 2.) On 10 December, a number of submarines were ordered to patrol to intercept a U.S. carrier (USS *Enterprise*), which had been sighted en route to the west coast. One of these I-boats was sunk 200 n.mi. north of Oahu by a Dauntless dive bomber off *Enterprise*. The carrier eluded the remainder of the Japanese submarines. A week later the U.S. began convoying in the eastern Pacific. Three destroyer divisions were assigned to escort duty. On 18 December, the first convoy of six ships departed San Francisco for Pearl Harbor.²

Having failed to intercept *Enterprise*, nine Japanese submarines established a barrier along the west coast (figure 1). These submarines were tasked both to intercept the unlocated U.S. carrier and to be in a position to sink merchant ships and shell coastal targets. Between 18 and 24 December, these submarines attacked nine ships between Hawaii and the coast (figure 2), sinking two of them (along with three ships that were sunk in the vicinity of Hawaii). The very low numbers of ships sunk can be attributed to the low emphasis the Japanese submarine doctrine placed upon attacking merchant shipping. Submarines were viewed as, principally, an arm of the battle fleet and thus "disruption of enemy commerce on the key sea routes by submarine warfare ... [was] to be conducted only in such a manner as not to interfere with the objectives of the main operations."³ The low priority assigned to merchant shipping attacks was emphasized to all submarine officers. The submarine battle instructions "rigidly fixed the numbers of torpedoes to be fired at various targets, i.e., merchant ships and destroyers -- one torpedo; cruisers -- three; battleships and aircraft carriers -- all available tubes. This limited the chances of hitting a merchant ship rather severely."⁴

The Japanese planned to shell coastal cities on Christmas eve. The Japanese submariners were elated at the prospect and believed "[i]t would make a fine Christmas gift for the Yankees." According to Japanese records, the plan was shelved due to the fact that "in the later part of December the antisubmarine measures taken by the United States became very severe and the Submarine Force Detachment ... was ordered by the Combined Fleet Headquarters to abandon the

1. Fairchild, ed., *United States Army in World War II: The Western Hemisphere*, p. 86.

2. *USN Administration in WWII, Western Sea Frontier*, p. 36.

3. General Headquarters, US Army Far East Command, Military History Section, Japanese Research Division, *Submarine Operations Dec 41 - Apr 42*, Japanese Monograph n. 102, 14 February 1952, p. 7. The Japanese Monographs were a series of studies conducted following the war utilizing former officers of the Japanese forces to conduct research on the war from Japan's perspective.

4. Hashimoto, Mochitsura, *SUNK: The Story of the Japanese Submarine Fleet, 1941-1945*, New York, Henry Holt and Company, 1954, p. 62.

plan." These "very severe" antisubmarine measures were primarily makeshift arrangements that included the use of training aircraft and fishing boats to conduct patrols up and down the coast.¹

Table 2. Japanese Submarine Operations Off the Pacific Coast

7 Dec 1941	I-26 sinks <i>Cynthia Olson</i> (AT), 33-42N, 145-29W
18 December	<i>Samoa</i> shelled by submarine, 41-09N, 124-37W
20 December	I-23 shells <i>Agwiworld</i> , 36-50N, 122-20W
21 December	I-17 sinks <i>Emidio</i> (AO), 40-30N, 124-35W
23 December	I-21 sinks <i>Montebello</i> (AO), 35-40N, 121-20W
23 December	<i>H.M. Storey</i> attacked by torpedo, 34-35N, 120-42W
23 December	<i>Larry Doheny</i> damaged by torpedo, shells 6 mi. off Estero Bay, CA
24 December	I-19 torpedoes, damages <i>Absaroka</i> , 33-45N, 118-33W
23 Feb 1942	I-17 shells Oil Refinery in Goleta, California
7 June	I-26 sinks <i>Coast Trader</i> (AK), 48-14N, 125-55W
19 June	I-25 torpedoes, damages <i>Fort Camosum</i> , 47-14N, 125-20W
20 June	I-26 shells Point Estevan, Vancouver Island
21 June	I-25 shells Fort Stevens, Oregon
23 June	<i>Camden</i> damaged by torpedo, 43-30N, 125-18W
9 September	I-25 Floatplane dropped incendiary bombs near Brookings, Oregon
29 September	I-25 Floatplane dropped incendiary bombs near Brookings, Oregon
4 October	I-25 sinks <i>Camden</i> (AO), 43-45N, 125-55W
6 October	I-25 sinks <i>Larry Doheny</i> (AO), 41-40N, 125-03W
10 October	I-25 sinks Soviet submarine L-16, 800 miles off the Washington Coast

Sources: *USN Administration in World War II, vol. 1, 163(a), Commander, Western Sea Frontier*, 1945, pp. 162-163; and Bert Webber, *Retaliation: Japanese Attacks and Allied Countermeasures on the Pacific Coast in World War II*, Cornwallis, Oregon, Oregon State University Press, 1975, p. vi.

The Japanese intention to divert U.S. resources into coastal defense operations might have succeeded with a "mass" shelling of the west coast so soon after Pearl Harbor. It is, however, difficult to assess the likelihood that such a shelling would have driven the U.S. to devote even greater resources to the defense of the west coast, potentially at the expense of forward operations.

1. Webber, *Retaliation*, pp. 14-15; Nobuo Fujita, "I Bombed the U.S.A." *USNI Proceedings*, June 1961, pp. 64-65.

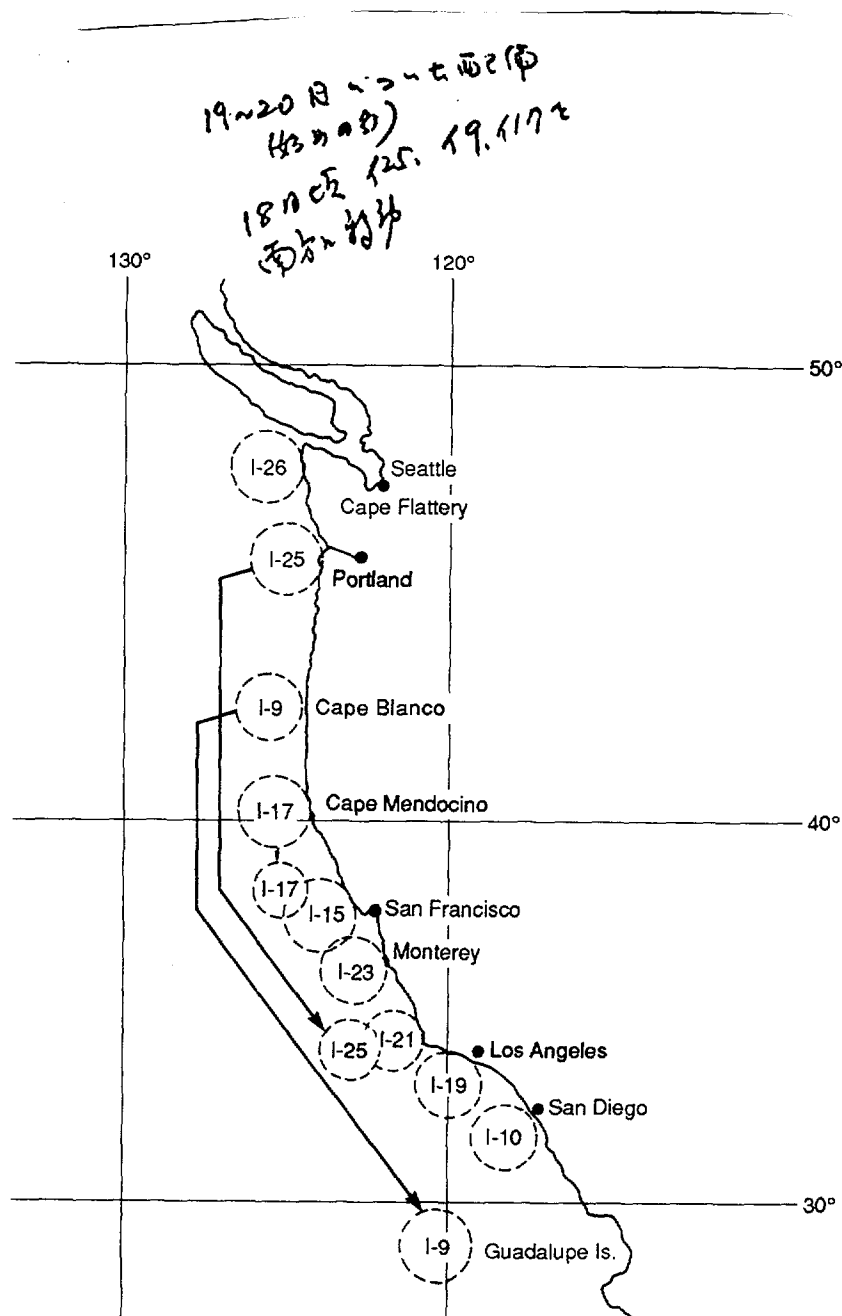


Figure 1. Japanese Submarine Patrol Areas Off the Pacific Coast, December 1941

Note: This figure displays the approximate patrol areas as of 20 December 1941. The Japanese above, which is reproduced from the original map, states: "The submarines were assigned on the 19-20th. About the 18th, I-25, I-9, I-17, were ordered to the south."

Source: From a post-war article by a Japanese submarine officer. Reproduced in: Bert Webber, *Retaliation: Japanese Attacks and Allied Countermeasures on the Pacific Coast in World War II*, Cornwallis, Oregon, Oregon State University Press, 1975, p. 31.

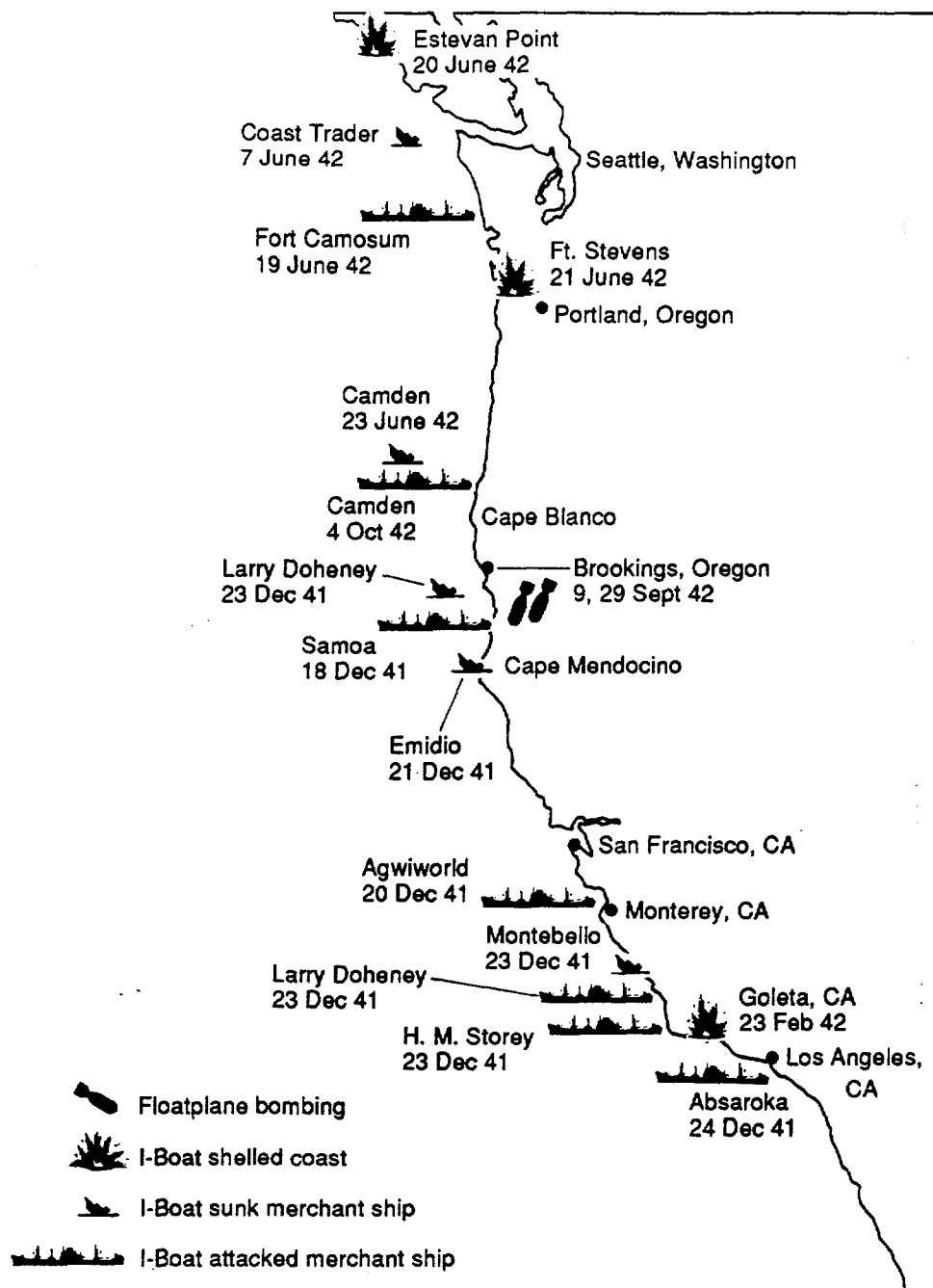


Figure 2. Japanese Submarine Operations Off the Pacific Coast

Sources: *USN Administration in World War II*, vol. 1, 163(a), Commander, Western Sea Frontier, 1945, pp. 162-163; and Bert Webber, *Retaliation: Japanese Attacks and Allied Countermeasures on the Pacific Coast in World War II*, Cornwallis, Oregon, Oregon State University Press, 1975, p. vi.

Operation *Paukensschlag*: U-Boat Operations Off the East Coast

In contrast to the reaction on the west coast, the U.S. Navy's Atlantic command had a less panicked response to the start of the war. In essence, the U.S. Navy had been in the Atlantic submarine war for months already. As well, the forces of the Eastern Sea Frontier had a short breathing spell following Pearl Harbor as German submarine operations in the Western Atlantic did not begin until a month after Hitler's declaration of war against the U.S. On 12 January 1942, Operation *Paukensschlag* (Drumroll), the German U-boat offensive off the U.S. east coast, opened with the sinking of the British steamer *Cyclops* 300 miles off Cape Cod. Other sinkings much closer to shore quickly followed. While only five U-boats were in the initial wave, the U.S. press was rife with rumors of hundreds of U-boats operating in the waters off the coast and German spies being landed along the coastline.

While there were public calls for strengthening ASW forces along the coast, little could be done to augment the minimal forces available to the Eastern Sea Frontier (USCG cutters, four Navy blimps, and 20 aircraft early in January 1942) short of stripping forces from trans-Atlantic convoys, a move successfully resisted by the Navy's leadership. As well, there was the need to reinforce the Pacific, which further exacerbated the escort shortage in the Atlantic. Finally, it was not for several months after the start of the *Paukensschlag* sinkings that it was fully realized that the U-boat operations were a much more serious threat than the early Japanese submarine operations off the west coast.¹ Even in light of greatly increasing losses caused by *Paukensschlag*, however, little action was taken. Adm. Ernest King even refused a British offer to augment U.S. forces with 24 Royal Navy trawlers in order to implement a convoy system along the east coast, since that in itself would weaken the defense of the trans-Atlantic convoys.²

In contrast to an over-imaginative, somewhat hysterical response to enemy operations (real or imagined) on the west coast, the Navy faced almost a lackadaisical response to the opening of the war among parts of the populace along the east coast. In February, the Mayor of Baltimore calmed fears that the war would hurt tourist business along the Maryland seashore because, he asserted, the submarine activity off the coast would become one of the greatest tourist attractions on the Maryland beaches.³ For months, the *Paukensschlag* submarines benefited from the glaring lights of sea-side establishments in Florida. It was not until 18 April that the Navy was able to institute a dim-out along the coast over the objections of Florida resort owners.⁴

The east coast military reaction to the sudden U.S. entry into the war differed as well, partly due to differing pre-war experience in the two oceans. In the Pacific, Plan Orange did not envision the U.S. entering the war with the Pacific battle fleet out of action and concerned about the defense of U.S. soil from Japanese attack. In the Atlantic, on the other hand, the U.S. Navy had already been involved in the submarine war and although the high shipping losses of Operation *Paukensschlag* might have shocked the Navy and the general public, the German submarine attacks were not themselves unexpected.

That Adm. King delayed the imposition of coastal convoys, even with the limited resources at hand, for as long as he did is perhaps surprising. However, as convoys and other shipping-

1. Edwin P. Hoyt, *U-Boats Offshore: When Hitler Struck America*, New York, Stein and Day, 1978, p. 31.

2. Terry Hughes and John Costello, *The Battle of the Atlantic*, New York, The Dial Press, 1977, pp. 190-214. The authors state that Adm. King's refusal of the British offer stemmed from his rabid anti-English attitudes. This is a simplistic evaluation of the situation. For example, a number of Royal Navy (RN) vessels were later utilized for convoy operations along the coast -- if a virulently Anglophobic King simply did not want RN vessels operating off the U.S. coast, this would not have been done.

3. Lingeman, *Don't you know there's a war on?* p. 42.

4. See Samuel Eliot Morison, *History of United States Naval Operations in World War II, vol. I: The Battle of the Atlantic: September 1939 - May 1943*, Boston, Little, Brown and Company, 1954, pp. 129-130.

control measures were put into effect, the U-boats moved to less protected waters. By August 1942, after millions of tons of shipping and only six U-boats sunk, the gaps in defense off the U.S. coast were closed and the U-boats would find hunting in these waters much more dangerous for the remainder of the war.

Public pressure, in this case from resort owners unwilling to sacrifice potential profits, exacerbated an already difficult situation at the beginning of 1942. The slow imposition of convoying and other basic ASW measures, which was due mainly to a shortage of suitable escorts, created difficulties in countering these civilian economic pressures. While civilian pressure did interfere with military operations in the face of the U-boat onslaught (primarily through the resistance to a dim-out along the coast), it does not appear that any force deployments were changed due to public pressure upon the Navy.

Reactions to the Halsey-Doolittle Raid: 1942 to the End of the War

While the positive effects of the Doolittle Raid on American morale in the dark days of 1942 and the corresponding negative effects on Japanese morale are relatively well known, the effects that the raid had on the conduct of Japanese military operations are, perhaps, less well known. Prior to the Halsey-Doolittle raid, the Japanese military leadership had been concerned about the possibility of a surprise attack on Tokyo. The Japanese had deployed substantial forces to defend against such an attack. The use of Army medium bombers (which had a longer range than any carrier-based aircraft) off USS *Hornet* surprised the Japanese, who had deployed their picket-ship line off the coast with carrier aviation in mind. The raid galvanized the Japanese both to seek to prevent another attack on Tokyo and to undertake some measure of revenge against the continental United States.¹ Thus, the influence of the raid on Japanese military planning included generating a greater consensus behind and lending new urgency to the prospective Midway campaign, additional Japanese I-boat operations off the west coast, and a reopening of Japanese research into the military uses of long-range balloons. As well, the raid produced fears in the U.S. that the Japanese would seek revenge against the continental United States.

Midway and the Aleutians

Within the U.S. leadership, there were great reservations as to the possible ramifications of the Doolittle raid. Secretary of War Stimson had been "a little doubtful" of this "pet project of the President's." (Stimson's concerns over the Navy's passive approach to the war in early December had, by February 1942, turned to concern with his perception of its overaggressiveness as carrier raids against forward Japanese bases began.) He feared that the raid on Tokyo would "only result in sharp reprisals from the Japanese without doing them much harm." Following the raid, in a meeting with Chief of Staff George C. Marshall and Chief of the Army Air Forces Henry "Hap" Arnold, Stimson spoke "a few earnest words ... about the danger of a Japanese attack on the west coast. ... I am very much impressed with the danger that the Japanese, having terribly lost face by this recent attack on them in Tokyo and Yokohama, will make a counterattack on us with carriers, and the west coast is still very badly undermanned."² Stimson was not alone in such fears. "Certain important officers" in Honolulu believed that the intelligence indications of an attack on Midway were a Japanese hoax and that the Japanese were planning to attempt another mass raid or even an invasion of Oahu.³

1. See Mitsuo Fuchida and Masatake Okumiya, *Midway, the battle that doomed Japan*, Annapolis, Maryland, Naval Institute Press, 1955, pp. 64-72 for a discussion of the Halsey-Doolittle raid's effect upon Japanese military planners.

2. 18 and 21 April 1942 entries in Stimson's diary, as quoted in: Gordon W. Prange, *Miracle at Midway*, New York, McGraw Hill, 1982, pp. 26-27.

3. See: Samuel Eliot Morison, *History of United States Naval Operations in World War II*, vol. III: *Coral Sea, Midway and Submarine Actions, May - August 1942*, Boston, Little, Brown and Company, 1960, p. 80.

On 19 April, the day after the Doolittle raid, James M. Landis, the Director of the Office of Civilian Defense, began a campaign to prepare the country for a revenge attack by the Japanese. By late May, there were serious concerns that the Japanese would retaliate with a chemical weapons strike against west coast cities. Over 350,000 gas masks (most of the nation's supply) were shipped to the Western Defense Command. In addition, at the beginning of June, a rushed reinforcement of the Western Defense Command's air fleet occurred: the 97th Bombardment Group moved from New England to west coast air ports and the Eighth Air Force's movement to the United Kingdom was temporarily put on hold.¹ Army intelligence disagreed with the Navy's assessment of Japanese plans and, in mid-May, argued that the "first priority" of the Japanese would be "raids on West Coast cities ... supported by heavy naval forces."²

Japanese planners were more concerned, however, about securing their own coast from further U.S. attacks than in risking major forces for revenge attacks. Security was sought through the planned capture and utilization of Midway and some Aleutian islands as scouting bases, combined with a decisive defeat of the remaining U.S. Navy ships in the Pacific, which, the Japanese thought, would be caught between the two island chains. As part of the operation, the Aleutian islands were to be attacked and several seized. Possession of these islands would extend the Japanese defensive arc. They also sat astride U.S.-Soviet lines of communication in the event of a Soviet entry into the Pacific war and would stand as a "knife pointed at the U.S. mainland." Yet this portion of the attack was meant primarily as a diversion from the main strike on Midway. As such, the northern portion of the Japanese plan occurred two days before the planned D-day on Midway.

The Japanese operations in the Aleutians failed to serve their diversionary purpose, primarily because of the U.S. ability to read the Japanese codes. Despite the Navy's intelligence information, there were Army and civilian concerns that the real Japanese focus would be against CONUS and that both Japanese thrusts would be primarily diversionary. CINCPACFLT, Adm. Chester W. Nimitz, acted on the intelligence information, however, and decided to concentrate the U.S. fleet against the Midway thrust, thus securing the dramatic victory at Midway.

Submarines Shell the Coast

During 1942, Japanese submarines shelled the west coast three times and a seaplane operating off a submarine bombed Oregon twice. The first shelling occurred prior to the Doolittle raid, on 23 February, near Santa Barbara. Nine days earlier, a German U-boat had shelled a refinery on Aruba, in the Caribbean.³ Following this attack, Roosevelt warned in a radio address that enemy ships could shell New York City or "enemy planes might even bomb Detroit [sic]." Stimson added that the public might as well prepare itself to accept "occasional blows, because the Army is determined not to disperse its forces in small fragments to serve as security garrisons." A *New York Times* editorial two days after the attack asserted that the "only danger was that these attacks might create a popular demand for protection at all costs."⁴

The 23 February Santa Barbara attack, by I-17, had somewhat of a personal vendetta attached to it. Prior to the war, the Japanese submarine captain had slipped and fallen on the dock of the oil installation that his submarine subsequently shelled. Total damage from the shelling, which included cracks in some pump equipment and a splintered catwalk railing, totaled some

1. Goss, "Air Defense of the Western Hemisphere," *Army Air Forces in World War II*, p. 298.

2. Fairchild, ed., *United States Army in World War II: The Western Hemisphere*, p. 89.

3. There were a total of four U-boat attacks against shore targets in the Western Hemisphere and all of these took place in 1942; two on Aruba, one on Curacao, and one on Puerto Rico. There were no German shore bombardments against CONUS.

4. Goss, "Air Defense of the Western Hemisphere," *Army Air Forces in World War II*, pp. 281-282.

\$500. The next night, the war came to Los Angeles. About 3 am, aircraft were reported overhead and the city was blacked out. For about an hour the "Battle of Los Angeles" raged, with over 1,400 rounds of 3-inch antiaircraft rounds fired into the sky. The raid was simply a case of nerves, as the Japanese had not sent planes over the city.¹

Following the Doolittle raid, the Japanese Naval High Command considered the use of submarines for retaliation against the U.S. and her allies. Several weeks after the Battle of Midway, the second and third Japanese shellings of North America occurred a day apart in mid-June. The first was an attack on the Estevan Point Lighthouse in British Columbia (this was the first attack against Canadian soil since Confederation). Approximately 25 rounds were fired at what the Japanese mistakenly considered an important communications facility. The greatest damage incurred were broken panes in the lighthouse windows. The next night, a different submarine shelled Fort Stevens, at the mouth of the Columbia river (the first attack against a CONUS military installation since the War of 1812). Again the Japanese aim was questionable. The most serious damage of this attack was not discovered for over a year -- a fragment from a shell had removed insulation from a power line, which took 16 months to rust.²

Perhaps the most enduring result of the Fort Stevens attack is the effect that it had upon the Coast Artillery Corps.

The death blow to the Harbor Defense units was dealt the night of the Japanese attack on Fort Stevens. There was no return fire. Whether the fire would have hit anything or not wasn't the point. With hundreds of guns and mortars along both Atlantic and Pacific shores, and thousands of men at the ready, we blew it for our Corps when we had the chance to shoot -- and didn't.³

In light of the great boost the U.S. coastal defense program received due to the considered need to reassure the general public against coastal raids following the Spanish-American War, the batteries' failure to fire truly damned U.S. coastal defense. While coastal defense battery construction continued throughout the war, this was just due to momentum in earlier construction programs; even many of these already started projects were discontinued (primarily because of the changing fortunes of war, rather than the failure to defeat the Columbia River raid).

GLEN Floatplane Attacks on Oregon

The Japanese submarine fleet deployed GLEN aircraft on a number of submarines that each had a deck hanger in which the dismantled aircraft was stowed. These slow, dual-pontoon floatplanes frequently were used to conduct reconnaissance. For example, on three occasions (16 December 1941, and 4 January and 23 February 1942), the floatplane off I-7 conducted reconnaissance missions over Pearl Harbor. Prior to the invasions of the Aleutians, the floatplane

1. Webber, *Retaliation*, p. 31-32. Nimitz, then CINCPACFLT, was concerned that the Japanese submarines in the Hawaii area might try a similar attack on Pearl Harbor oil tanks. In truth, the Japanese were planning a seaplane attack on Hawaii, utilizing submarines to refuel the planes. While the Japanese did launch such an attack, the planes dropped their bombs on uninhabited regions. RAdm. Edwin T. Layton, USN (Ret.), *And I Was There: Pearl Harbor and Midway -- Breaking the Secrets*, New York, William Morrow & Company, 1985, pp. 372-374.

2. Capt. Bill Aikman and Capt. Dave Cossette (RCAF), "The Attack on Estevan Lighthouse," *Sentinel*, vol. 10, n. 7, 1974, p. 12; and, Webber, *Retaliation*, p. 38.

3. Interview with Zed Harris, member of the Fort Stevens Coastal Artillery unit, as quoted in: Webber, *Retaliation*, p. 62. It is still unclear as to why the batteries did not fire. The best reconstruction states that the commander felt the submarine was out-of-range of the shore batteries, but Fort Stevens' 10-inch guns out-ranged the Japanese submarine's 5.5-inch gun by several thousand yards.

off I-25 scouted heavily defended Kodiak Island. This same plane also flew missions over a number of Australian and New Zealand cities.¹

One GLEN pilot became intrigued with the possibility of using these submarine-launched floatplanes to carry out strikes against the U.S. In a proposal to the High Command, Warrant Flying Officer Nobuo Fujita argued for GLEN strikes on such targets as the "Panama Canal locks, and aircraft factories or naval bases around San Diego, San Francisco, and Seattle, all at the same time." Months later Fujita was called to Tokyo for the planning of a raid on "the American mainland." The planning came to fruition on 9 September 1942, when Fujita, flying off the I-25, dropped incendiary bombs in Oregon forest land. A planning officer had explained to Fujita the rationale for an attack on an unpopulated region:

The northwestern United States is full of forests. Once a blaze gets started in the deep woods it is very difficult to stop. Sometimes whole towns are destroyed. If we were to bomb some of these forests, it would put the enemy to much trouble. It might even cause large-scale panic, once residents knew Japan could reach out and bomb their factories and homes from 5000 miles away.²

This raid also served to enact a personal small-scale retaliation for the Doolittle raid. I-25 had been in Yokohama harbor during the bombing of the Japanese naval base there. According to the pilot, following the dropping of the bomb, his "mind leaped back ... to when ... one of Doolittle's planes put a bomb into the aircraft carrier *Ryuho* ... which killed a number of her crew. That pilot had bombed my homeland for its first time. Now I was bombing his. It gave me a great deal of satisfaction."³

The raid garnered great attention in the press; the *Seattle Post-Examiner* ran a war extra with a banner headline "JAP AIR RAIDER DROPS FIRE BOMB IN OREGON." The raid did cause significant fear amongst the population of Oregon, as the following quote attests:

As a small child ... I detected the fear in adults that we might be bombed. It was a very real feeling. I've remembered it for thirty years.⁴

The newspaper and radio accounts created a turmoil and led to political pressure upon the military leadership for more protection of the Western frontier. Gen. DeWitt, commander of the Western Frontier, sent staff officers to Washington, D.C., to seek a higher equipment priority for his command. A four-plane flight of P-38s was transferred to a small coastal Oregon airstrip, from which they spent several months responding to frequent false alarms.⁵ Despite this reaction among a portion of the Oregon population, the long-term effect of the raid was minimal.

The same Japanese pilot bombed the U.S. for the second time on September 29, again dropping incendiary weapons in a rural, forested area. The submariners hoped that these two raids, combined with the ships that they had sunk off the coast, would build the "public clamor" that they sought.⁶ In neither case was there much physical effect (no fires were started), and the military response by U.S. forces was very small.

1. Fujita, "I Bombed the U.S.A.," *Proceedings*, p. 66.

2. This conversation occurred at a planning meeting in July, 1942 in Tokyo. Fujita, "I Bombed the U.S.A.," *Proceedings*, pp. 65-67.

3. Fujita, "I Bombed the U.S.A.," *Proceedings*, pp. 66-67.

4. As quoted in Webber, *Retaliation*, p. 76.

5. Webber, *Retaliation*, p. 76.

6. Fujita, "I Bombed the U.S.A.," *Proceedings*, p. 68.

***FuGo* : Japanese Balloon Bombing, The First Intercontinental Air Raids**

The intercontinental balloon bomb was one of the more unusual and lesser known Japanese weapons of World War II. Launched from the Japanese home islands, these balloons rode the jet stream to drop their bombs on the continental United States. The balloon bombs evolved out of research work begun in the early 1930s which had been shelved in the middle of the decade. This research was resurrected in the search for means to retaliate for the Doolittle raid.

The balloon campaign had two major goals beyond retaliation for the Doolittle raid: to force U.S. attention and allocation of resources away from the main battle areas (both through disrupting U.S. morale at home and by causing forest fires that would require additional resources to fight); and to raise Japanese morale at home by showing that Japan could successfully strike the U.S.

Operation *FuGo*, as the balloon-bombing campaign was called, opened with the release of its first balloon on 2 November 1944 (symbolically important because it was the anniversary of Emperor Meiji's birthday). Two days later the first balloon was discovered off the California coast. (See table 3.) Over the next six months, the Japanese launched 9,300 of these 32-foot tall paper balloons, each carrying a mixed payload of antipersonnel and incendiary bombs. While perhaps as many as 10 percent reached the U.S., the true figure will never be known, as the balloons carried a self-destruct charge timed to activate following release of the bombs (although some of these devices literally froze during the ocean crossing, providing the U.S. technical services with a number of balloons to work on and experiment with).¹

The Japanese concept was that bombs would rain down upon the U.S. and a panic would ensue, as there would be no understanding of the mechanism of the attack. The timing of the balloon campaign could not have come at a better psychological moment for the Japanese. London was suffering under the German rocket assault. In the Pacific, the Japanese had begun *kamikaze* attacks. Thus, the American public was fearful of suffering from some sort of new attack -- in the balloon bomb, the Japanese threatened to combine the technological prowess of the Germans with their own fanaticism.

By the middle of January, the commanders of the Western Defense Command and the Western Sea Frontier were confronting this issue on a daily basis. A number of countermeasures were taken. The only effective active countermeasure was maintaining aircraft on strip alert in the Aleutians and along the west coast to shoot down detected balloons. Pilots just out of training manned aircraft on the west coast for a week before being sent to their units. While the planes in the Aleutians were able to shoot down large numbers of balloons, only two were shot down by aircraft based on the mainland.² Under the Fourth Air Force, the Sunset Project was initiated in the spring of 1945 to test radars for the detection of the balloons. A total of six radars was installed along the Washington coast, with chase planes at nearby airfields. These were installed following the end of the bombing campaign, however, and were never even tested against balloons.

1. For an excellent technical description of the balloons, their payloads, and launching techniques, see: Robert C. Mikesch, *Balloon Bomb Attacks on North America: Japan's World War II Assaults*, Aero Publishers, Fallbrook, CA, 1982, pp. 39-66.

2. During the balloon-bombing campaign, on almost 500 occasions planes were dispatched in search of reported balloons in the West. Navy planes flying in the Aleutians had much greater success in downing balloons. In one day, 13 April 1945, Navy F6F Hellcat fighters shot down nine balloons, more than four times the number Fourth Air Force fighters shot down in 500 missions over a six-month period. Even on this successful day, less than a third of the sighted balloons were shot down. Robert C. Mikesch, *Balloon Bomb Attacks on North America: Japan's World War II Assaults*, Aero Publishers, Fallbrook, CA, 1982, p. 29-30.

A number of civil defense measures were taken to cope with any damage that might result from the balloon bombing. Under Project Firefly, some 2,700 troops (including a battalion of paratroopers) and a number of aircraft were stationed at critical points to be used in fire fighting missions as necessary. (Not a single forest fire was confirmed as having been started by a balloon bomb, however.) The Lightning Project was a precautionary plan organized through the Department of Agriculture to deal with any evidence of biological or chemical warfare devices on the balloons. Word was spread in the agriculture community to be on the alert for the first sign of any strange disease in livestock or crops, and stocks of decontamination chemicals and sprays were shipped to strategic points in the western states.¹

Table 3. Chronology of Japanese Balloon Bomb Activities

1933	Japanese begin research into long-range balloon bombs
1935	Balloon bomb research effort halted
May 1942	Research effort resumed
August 1943	Research effort on submarine-launched balloon bombs halted
August 1944	Japanese research balloon recovered in Nevada
2 November	First balloon bomb launched from Japan
4 November	First balloon recovered off California
10 Mar 1945	Balloon cuts off power to Hanford nuclear plant in Washington
Early April	Balloon bombing campaign ends
5 May	Bomb from balloon kills six people in Oregon

Sources: Robert C. Mikesch, *Balloon Bomb Attacks on North America: Japan's World War II Assaults*, Aero Publishers, Fallbrook, CA, 1982; and, Bert Webber, *Retaliation: Japanese Attacks and Allied Countermeasures on the Pacific Coast in World War II*, Cornwallis, Oregon, Oregon State University Press, 1975.

Many other measures were considered. One of the most ambitious called for a line of 200 radar units and 200+ anti-aircraft guns along 1,000 miles of coast. The estimated costs ranged from \$31 to \$88 million for installation and \$2.5 million in ammunition per 1,000 balloons. Even with this investment, it was admitted that this defense "might fail to detect as many as 50 percent of the balloons passing overhead." Another defense scheme called for the stationing of 200 picket ships offshore for every 1,000 miles of coastline. This would have been far more expensive than the coastal defense line. The planners rejected these ambitious schemes:

1. Mikesch, *Balloon Bomb Attacks on North America*, p. 29. Initially, when it was realized that the balloon bombs were part of a campaign against the U.S., the intelligence assessors could not believe that the Japanese would go to this great an effort only to deliver conventional munitions. Thus, there were great fears that the balloons would begin delivering some sort of biological or chemical weaponry. All Japanese associated with the balloon-bombing campaign have, in postwar accounts, denied that this was ever a consideration on their part. However, the fact that one major site for balloon manufacture was on Okunoshima Island, the site of the Japanese chemical warfare factory, would have greatly increased these fears if it had been known to U.S. intelligence. (Yuri Tanak, "Poison Gas: the story Japan would like to forget," *Bulletin of Atomic Scientists*, vol. 4, n. 8, October 1988, p. 15.) Similar fears, based on doubts that such extreme efforts would be made simply to deliver conventional munitions, might accompany any Soviet conventional-SLCM attacks on CONUS during a war.

Unless the payload [becomes] something very much more dangerous, it is clear that the measure of success to the enemy...will be the amount of men and equipment which we divert to defensive measures against it.¹

The planners' hesitation over the diversion of large amounts of resources to counter the balloons reflected the relatively low threat that the balloons were perceived to pose.

The balloon-bombing campaign ended in April 1945. While it was possible for the Japanese to continue, they were greatly frustrated by the virtually total news blackout on the balloon bombing in the U.S. press. They only knew of one bomb (a very early one) that had reached the United States. The voluntary censorship program's ability to dampen public awareness of the Japanese balloon-bombing campaign proved to be perhaps the most effective U.S. countermeasure against the *FuGo* campaign. Censorship of information on balloon bombing was emphasized both to deny the Japanese targeting information and to prevent the outbreak of a public panic.² It succeeded in both aims. By April 1945, the U.S. strategic bombing campaign had disrupted Japanese hydrogen production and bomb damage to the railway system hindered the delivery of hydrogen to the balloon launch sites. As well, by April the supply of paper balloons was exhausted and the production of a Japanese Navy-designed rubber balloon, necessary for the continuation of the balloon-bombing campaign into the summer months, would exacerbate an already severe shortage of rubber in Japan. Thus, absent news of effects of the *FuGo* campaign and in light of the increasing difficulties they were facing, the Japanese did not view the campaign as producing results worthy of the assets that would be required to maintain a flow of bombs crossing the Pacific.³

The balloon-bombing campaign was a failure despite the tremendous efforts and ingenious thinking that went into it. The reasons for the failure are many. Perhaps the most important is the simple failure of any of the balloon bomb loads to cause significant damage, such as bombs falling in the middle of a city.⁴ Secondly, the weather cooperated with the Japanese in delivering the balloons to the U.S., but not in fostering forest fires -- the first balloon bombs arrived with the

1. As quoted in Webber, *Retaliation*, p. 114.

2. The Office of Censorship used a combination of methods for the control of information during the war. Censorship of the media was on a voluntary basis, with editors and broadcasters supplied with guidelines issued by the Office of Censorship. Compliance with these guidelines was generally very good throughout the war. (For a discussion of the Office of Censorship during the war, see Byron Price (Director of the Office of Censorship throughout the war), *A Report on the Office of Censorship* (USG, Historical Reports on War Administration, Office of Censorship, Series 1), Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C., 1945.) Regarding information policy regarding enemy attacks against CONUS, Price stated that "the objectives of all of us should be...: First to make certain that we do not encourage panic among the civilian population. Second to be cautious about giving the enemy information which will enable him to determine whether he has attained his objectives." As quoted in: Theodore F. Koop, *Weapon of Silence*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1946, p. 197.

3. Mikesch, *Balloon Bomb Attacks on North America*, p. 38.

4. There are two exceptions to this. On 10 March 1945, a balloon struck the main transmission line from the Bonneville dam to the Hanford Engineering Works, Washington, causing a temporary power outage at the plant. This power outage caused an unscheduled shutdown utilizing the previously untested safety equipment in this emergency procedure. The Hanford plant was the source of plutonium for the Manhattan project. The power interruption "necessitated three days of work to get the piles back to full capacity." During the balloon-bombing campaign, numerous bombs were sighted in the vicinity of the plant and an anti-aircraft artillery unit was deployed to defend it against the balloon threat. On the same day as the power outage, another bomb was shot down just a quarter-mile outside the plant's outer perimeter. The second case of loss to balloon bombs came on 5 May, when the wife of a minister and five children on a church outing were killed by a bomb which exploded when, evidently, one of the children played with the device. This incident caused a partial end to the censorship of the balloon attacks in order to spread a wider warning about the threat. (Webber, *Retaliation*, pp. 121-122; and, Stephane Groueff, *Manhattan Project: The Untold Story of the Making of the Atomic Bomb*, Boston, Little-Brown, 1969, pp. 309-310.

first big snows. Finally, the voluntary censorship in place in the U.S. prevented the balloon-bombing campaign from becoming general knowledge. (It is unclear that the censorship program would have been as successful had balloon bombs caused significant casualties or damage.)

Diversions of military assets to counter the balloon bomb threat took place, such as the paratroopers detailed to fight fires. These diversions, however, occurred when the U.S. was at the peak of its military strength, and they were not significant to the war effort. One analysis showed that the balloon-bombing campaign cost the Japanese just \$2 million and that costs to the U.S. totaled more than ten times that. On this basis, the analyst concluded that the Japanese campaign was at least partially a success.¹ However, such an assessment fails to consider the relative strengths of the two war economies. The U.S. could afford to divert its greater expenditure much more easily than Japan could afford even a small investment in any such speculative project.

The Japanese Experience, in Conclusion

In essence, all of the Japanese attacks against the United States coast failed to achieve their desired results, for reasons ranging from the absurd to the dramatic. The *FuGo* attacks might have had greater effect if they had begun in the summer of 1944, when forest fires would have been more likely, or if the Office of Censorship had not been so skilled by 1944 in controlling the release of information about the bombing campaign. Certainly, the seaplane raid on Oregon created concerns in the Western Defense Command -- if there had been a large number of these raids early in the war it seems likely that substantial forces would have been deployed to counter this direct threat to America. The attack on the Aleutians might have diverted the U.S. Navy's attention northward for several vital days if Navy cryptographers had not already had near total access to the Japanese Navy's communications.

The Japanese Navy's first major plan for attacking the coast to affect civilian morale, the canceled Christmas Eve shelling of west coast cities, might have had a tremendous effect on the American public's morale and, therefore, the U.S. ability to prioritize missions rationally for the conduct of the war. Following so closely upon Pearl Harbor, such a successful raid might have created irresistible pressure for the deployment of significantly more ASW assets to the Eastern Pacific. However, considering the minimal damage caused the three times that I-boats did shell the west coast, it is unclear whether in December 1941 the nine I-boats would have caused enough actual damage to magnify the public panic greatly in the Western states.

In examining the effects of the Japanese threats to the coast upon civilian morale, one is struck by the fact that none of the attacks was sufficiently destructive to create a plausible situation for a great public panic. Yet, substantial groundwork had been laid by the Pearl Harbor attack. At the beginning of the war, many government officials were greatly concerned about a Japanese threat to the coast and, for example, even after the initial onslaught of *Paukenschlag* U-boats, there remained a greater fear of Japanese submarine operations off the Pacific coast than of German operations off the east coast. However, the Japanese operations against CONUS failed to capitalize on the fears of west coast residents. Thus, as the fear generated by the Pearl Harbor attack dissipated, the possibility of a great public outcry over these limited attacks seems to have diminished.

The Saboteur Threat

Throughout the war, one of the threats from the sea of greatest concern to the U.S. political and military leadership was that saboteurs would be landed from submarines. Large numbers of FBI agents, Coast Guard and Army Units, and coast defense watchers were deployed along both

1. Carmine A. Prioli, "Let Slip the Bats and Balloons of War ... The Strangest Weapons of World War II: Part 1: The "Fu-Go" Project," *American Heritage*, April-May 1982, p. 92.

coasts. On 13 June 1942, U-202 landed four agents on a beach on Long Island, and, on 17 June, U-584 landed four more near Jacksonville, Florida. All eight were captured by the FBI within two weeks. These landings were the only instances of agent landings by submarine prior to 1944, but they stimulated both the Army and the Coast Guard to undertake a much more active "beach defense" in the coming years.¹

In the West, there were frantic antisaboteur preparations from the first news of the attack on Pearl Harbor. Within hours of the attack, local groups along the Oregon coast organized to combat any prospective Japanese invasion attempt,² and, as noted earlier, troops were dispersed along the beaches. Such activity was not limited to the coast. The President signed Executive Order 9066 on 19 February 1942, which paved the way for the internment of over 100,000 Japanese-Americans for the duration of the war.³ The internment perhaps most clearly shows to what heights the hysteria rose on the west coast at the beginning of the war. There had been many reports of signaling from the shore to sea and rumors of Japanese activities in the U.S., but even in the beginning months of the war, there were no "known" cases of such activity. The decision in favor of internment was fostered by the degree of uncertainty and hysteria on the west coast at the beginning of the war, combined with the long-standing anti-Oriental racism along the coast.

In 1942, other measures for the defense of the coast against a saboteur landing were undertaken. (One early, quickly shelved plan called for placing fences along the entire U.S. Pacific coast.) The main defense consisted of observation posts and beach patrols augmented by Navy ship and small-boat patrols and (starting in late 1943) Navy blimp patrols. The Coast Guard increased its presence rapidly. The prewar total of 10 coastal lookout stations along the Oregon and Washington coastline had more than doubled by April 1942, with 13 new lifeboat stations as well. In 1943, the Coast Guard added horses (taken from Army cavalry units) to its inventory to increase the mobility of its patrols along the beaches.

Following the floatplane attack from I-25, the authorities feared that the plane might have been operating from an isolated lake. FBI agents scoured the region but found nothing other than "beautiful mountains, beautiful lakes, good fishing, tall wonderful trees, mosquitoes, and sore, wet feet." In Canada, there were similar fears. Shortly after the start of the Pacific War, many fishing boats with their entire crews were enlisted into reserve service for patrolling British Columbia's coastline. One unusual Canadian technique for complicating any Japanese attempt to land saboteurs involved surrounding Vancouver and other islands with pilings to prevent the landing of a floatplane near the shoreline. (Many of these remained in place until they were removed in the late 1960s.)⁴

Thousands of troops were involved in patrolling beaches and manning coastal fortifications. But, by mid-1943, a reduction in the size of these forces began. Whether public fears over a saboteur or invasion threat had any influence on the size of units assigned to coastal defense and their deployments along the coast is unclear. It seems likely that, if the military had not instituted some form of coastal defense activity (and the coastal defense units that existed were highly visible to coastal populations and well integrated with civil defense groups), there would have been a public outcry for just such activity.

1. Fairchild, ed., *United States Army in World War II: The Western Hemisphere*, p. 99-100. On 29 November 1944, U-1230 landed two German spies in Maine. Ladislav Farago, *The Tenth Fleet*, New York, Ivan Obolensky, Inc., 1962, p. 9-11.

2. Lingeman, *Don't you know there's a war on?* p. 44.

3. For an analysis of the WWII internment of Japanese-Americans, see: *Personal Justice Denied*, Report of the Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians, Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C., 1982.

4. Webber, *Retaliation*, pp. 33-34, 76, 79-81, 87-89.

Reducing the Defenses, Calculating Risk

In mid-1943, the U.S. began groping toward the reduction of the forces assigned to CONUS Defense Commands. At this time, approximately 379,000 troops remained in these commands, still almost at the peak strength of March 1942.¹ The U.S. had clearly passed from the defensive to the offensive stage of the war, and there was general agreement in the government that all possible resources must be concentrated on the offensive. In June 1943, the Army asked for approval of a policy of calculated risk that would gradually draw down the continental forces. There was little urgency in the decision-making process as the Army Operations Division estimated that it would be over a year before these forces could be moved overseas. However, discussion of a potential restructuring of CONUS defense continued. The Army Air Force, in supporting approval of a policy that would lead to a dismantling of the Defense Commands, contended that:

The greatest danger we have to face from air attack under the present strategic situation is that moderately successful nuisance raids might influence an uninformed Congress and an uninformed press to divert a substantial portion of our offensive force to the protection of the continental United States.²

The Army Air Force argued that the Germans, at most, could attack the east coast with a small number of planes with light bomb loads. This token effort should not justify, they argued, a continued diversion of American strength from offensive operations. By the end of 1943, a strong argument was put forth to begin the dismantling of the Continental Defense Commands under the following rationale.

The capabilities of our enemies to strike against the Continental United States are limited, at most, to nuisance raids. To withhold from offensive action a sufficient force to prevent such raids would render far greater assistance to the enemy than he could expect from the most effective raids... The existence of the Defense Commands creates in the public mind a false sense of security. If nuisance raids are undertaken, they will, in all probability, succeed to approximately the maximum extent of their capabilities. The people of the Nation will believe that the enemy's successes were made possible by military inefficiency. The Army will lose highly valuable public confidence. The measures which we are about to put into effect for political reasons are thus likely to prove unsound politically. ... The hostile situation and our own critical personnel situation no longer justify the retention in the Defense Commands of any units that are not continuously prepared and available for employment in our overseas offensive effort.³

Instead of dismantling the Defense Commands, it was decided to reduce their responsibilities commensurate with the reduced threat and the reduced assets that would be allocated to defensive missions. Thus, the War Department took over responsibility for the results of any enemy strike against CONUS from the individual defense commands. By mid-1944 less than 65,000 troops remained in the Defense Commands, which had been put on a strictly "nominal" basis by that time. The reduction of forces might have been even faster, but in 1943 there had been delays in moving forces overseas, so there was no need to speed the dismantling of the Defense Commands.

1. This is a somewhat deceptive comparison. Over the year, the composition of the Defense Commands had changed. By this time many of these troops were engaged in training and many others were limited-service and over-age officers and men.

2. Fairchild, ed., *United States Army in World War II: The Western Hemisphere*, p. 107.

3. Fairchild, ed., *United States Army in World War II: The Western Hemisphere*, p. 109-110.

Seaborne Threats to CONUS, 1945

In the spring of 1945, in both the Atlantic and the Pacific the U.S. Navy was called upon to protect CONUS from potential last-ditch threats from the Germans and the Japanese.

On 27 March 1945, Adm. William F. Halsey was appointed Commander Mid-Pacific Striking Force. Under his command were the carriers USS *Bonhomme Richard* and USS *Ranger*, as well as all available surface units at Hawaii and in west coast ports. Halsey was "charged with [the] interception and destruction of enemy raiding forces" that "certain high officials" in Washington feared were even then crossing the Pacific to attack San Francisco during the United Nations Conference. Following the U.N. meeting, the command was disbanded. It is not surprising that this was a false alarm, as the Japanese were unable to operate carriers effectively following their heavy losses to both ships and aircraft in the Battle of Leyte Gulf in November 1944.¹

In the Atlantic, a more substantial threat existed.² During the war, the Germans engaged in preparations for a token air raid against the east coast. In 1942, a model was produced for a bomber to fly from the Brittany Peninsula to New York and back. By June 1944, however, the Germans had abandoned the development of a long-range bomber. For several months following this, the Germans worked on a plan for a one-way bomber, with the crew to be rescued by submarines after the bombing. In September, technical experts termed "practical" a scheme to launch a V-2 rocket from a barge, which would be towed across the Atlantic by a submarine to a point approximately 100 miles offshore.

This last scheme was probably the basis for the intelligence reports which began in November 1944 that U-boats might attempt a raid on east coast cities using rockets similar to those being used against London.³ For a week in early November, the Eastern Sea Frontier conducted a saturation air search against submarines within 250 miles of New York City. A month later, the official War Department assessment was that the "diversion of troops or effort from present missions to meet the air defense aspect of the robot bomb threat is altogether unjustified."⁴ However, the Navy did not agree with this Army-dominated assessment of the situation.

On 8 January, Adm. Jonas H. Ingram, commander-in-chief of the Atlantic Fleet, announced in a press conference the possibility that the Germans would attempt a rocket attack on an east coast city within the next 30 to 60 days.

The next alert you get is likely to be the real McCoy. But we're ready for them! The thing to do is not to get too excited about it. It might knock out a high building or two. It might create a fire hazard. It would certainly cause casualties in the

1. Halsey Action Report, "Operations of the Third Fleet, 26 January - 1 July 1945," 00228, 14 July 1945, as quoted in: Clark G. Reynolds, *The Fast Carriers, The Forging of An Air Navy*, McGraw-Hill, New York, 1968, p. 320.

2. This discussion on Group *Seewolf*/Operation Teardrop is based upon: Samuel Eliot Morison, *History of United States Naval Operations in World War II, vol.X: The Atlantic Battle Won, May 1943 - May 1945*, Boston, Little, Brown and Company, 1960, pp. 344-356; and, Lt. Philip K. Lundeborg, USNR, "American Anti-submarine Operations in the Atlantic, May 1943 - May 1945," 1953, unpublished manuscript held at the Navy Department Library, Bldg 57 Navy Yard, Washington, D.C., pp. 404-439.

3. Concerns about this threat began with the interrogation report of a survivor from a submarine sunk off the coast. In a 25 October 1944 memo, FBI Director John Edgar Hoover warned the Director of Naval Intelligence that, according to this prisoner, the Germans were planning some sort of "buzz-bomb" attack against the United States from a special task-force of missile-carrying submarines. Farago, *The Tenth Fleet*, p. 7.

4. 11 December 1944 Joint Memorandum to the President, as quoted in: Fairchild, ed., *United States Army in World War II: The Western Hemisphere*, p. 112.

limited area where it might hit. But it could not seriously affect the progress of the war.

It may be only ten or twelve buzz bombs, but they may come before we can stop them. They may hit before we know they're on the way. ... At any rate, I'm springing the cat from the bag to let the Huns know that we are ready for them.¹

Ingram evidently feared that the public on the seaboard was becoming too complacent about the war effort and he hoped the announcement would counter this trend. Not surprisingly, his statements caused a sensation along the coast.

Doenitz was, in fact, planning a final operation on the eastern seaboard. However, the U-boats that were to be part of Group *Seewolf* in March 1945 carried no secret weapons but were simply Type VII-C schnorkel-equipped 740-ton U-boats. Ingram countered Doenitz's *Seewolf* with Operation Teardrop; 2 Hunter-Killer groups, each built around 2 escort carriers, and over 50 escorts deployed in the mid-Atlantic to intercept the 5 U-boats. With very good intelligence, five of the *Seewolf* submarines were intercepted and sunk (as well as an additional U-boat that departed Norway to join them).

Neither of these operations had much, if any, effect on the course and outcome of the war. In both cases, extensive forces were deployed against what was a mostly imaginary threat -- Halsey found his assignment rather humorous, and the intelligence reports on German U-boat missiles were not regarded as having a great deal of validity. Yet, significant assets were deployed against them for two reasons: the severe effect these operations would have had on U.S. morale and prestige if they were successful; and, most importantly, at this point of the war the forces were available for redeployment without detrimental effect on the U.S. ability to prosecute the war.

In the case of Halsey in the Pacific, fears of "certain high officials" easily caused changes in military deployments. On the east coast, any fears of high government officials or the public seem to have been largely fostered by Ingram in order to guarantee continued vigilance in coastal defense activity until V-E day.

World War II, in Conclusion

During World War II, the U.S. military, particularly the U.S. Navy, seems to have generally remained immune from pressures to divert forces from offensive operations in order to counter perceived threats to the coast or coastal waters. In the beginning of the war, the shock of the Pearl Harbor disaster produced an atmosphere in which both the U.S. Navy and the population at large saw an urgent necessity to augment coastal defenses. When the tide began to turn and the shock of the Japanese surprise attack began to wear off, such apparently unnecessary diversions became less common. The U.S. military's perception of the importance of the public mood grew in sophistication through the war. How sophisticated this realization had become can be seen in the decision-making debate behind the weakening of Defense Commands and in the handling of the balloon-bombing campaign.

When it became clear that the Continental Defense Commands were over strength and the U.S. had largely shifted from defensive to offensive operations, releasing the assets that were tied up in the Defense Commands became an important issue. It was considered to be imprudent simply to remove assets from the Commands, however, for the very existence of these Commands was important in the public mind. If the Defense Commands were gutted and either the Japanese or the Germans managed to make a symbolic strike on CONUS, it would call into question the U.S. military's efficiency and could create as many questions as Pearl Harbor had about the

1. Farago, *The Tenth Fleet*, pp. 12-13.

military leadership. On the other hand, if the Defense Commands were relieved of many responsibilities and the public were prepared for the possibility of some limited form of attack on the coast, the possibility of public hysteria in the case of a symbolic strike would be less than if the public perceived itself to be safe behind the Defense Commands' shield.

When the balloon-bombing campaign began in November 1944, this policy was put to the test. However, censorship of news reports concerning the attacks was stressed, among other reasons, to prevent just the sort of public panic that the Japanese intended. The military leadership was very aware of the potential havoc that a public panic could create. The military response that might be required in light of such a panic would be vastly disproportionate to the threat that the balloon bombs posed. General public awareness of the extent of Operation *FuGo*, which might well have led to some hysteria, might have created a demand for military counter-actions that were not justified by the minimal effectiveness of the balloon-bombing campaign. (Some 45,000 bombs on 9,300 balloons over a six-month period killed six people and caused little property damage.) The successful maintenance of strict adherence to censorship guidelines circumvented this possibility.

LESSONS OF THE HISTORICAL EXPERIENCE

During the four wars examined above, threats to the U.S. coasts or coastal waters were perceived at various times. Some of those threats caused or influenced a decision to divert U.S. forces from what might have been the preferred operations; more frequently, however, U.S. forces were not diverted from their "normal" operations by such threats to CONUS. The situations in which diversions of disproportionate forces to defend CONUS did occur seem to fall within three main categories.

- The military does not clearly demonstrate to the public and, especially, to the political leadership the logic of the preferred force employment pattern. Politicians who do not fully appreciate the military arguments may then respond too quickly to public pressure for direct and perceptible defensive measures. This situation is one where it is most likely that forces will be redeployed against the best judgment of the military leadership. The splitting of the Atlantic fleet at the beginning of the Spanish-American War falls within this pattern.
- The military itself is split over its assessment of the nature and severity of the threat. In this instance, public concern might add weight to the defense-first side of the military debate, but it is a military evaluation of the situation that ultimately causes the misallocation of resources, not the public pressure. The opening months of the U.S. participation in World War I were marked by disagreement within the Naval leadership over how best to utilize the Navy, and substantial U.S. Navy forces were not deployed forward to European waters until President Wilson intervened directly.
- The military has excess force available, allowing the commitment of overwhelming forces to protect against a perceived threat to CONUS without seriously affecting operations in forward operating areas. The creation of Halsey's carrier command in the spring of 1945 is a good example of such a situation. While the threat was far-fetched, it had the potential for seriously damaging America's morale and for disrupting U.S. military operations, and the U.S. could easily afford to counter the feared Japanese carrier raid without substantially affecting the conduct of the war.

The most dangerous situation is one in which the political-military decision makers are badly informed of the actual military situation. Under those circumstances the military leadership may respond to unexpected setbacks with undue caution, and the political leadership may respond to public pressure by calling for obviously defensive military redeployments. Furthermore, such public pressure is most likely to build in a situation in which the general populace remains ill-informed about actual military plans and progress.

At times, the use of what, according to military logic, may be ineffective units can have a significant psychological effect. As Theodore Roosevelt discovered, it may not matter whether a unit can fight "a galley of Alcibiades;" its sheer physical presence may be all that is necessary for reassuring a worried public. Additionally, the active presence of such units might actually deter an enemy that is unsure of the threat it faces. The Japanese I-boats off the west coast in December 1941 were withdrawn and their bombardment of U.S. cities cancelled because of the threat they perceived from the patrol activities of fishing boats and training aircraft. A more battle-hardened enemy might not be so easily deterred. (The *Paukenschlag* U-boats were confronted by similar U.S. patrol activities and their operations continued completely unhindered until more effective units were devoted to the ASW campaign in the Eastern Atlantic.)

At some point, as was the case with strategic bombing campaigns of both sides in World War II, such attacks would likely cross a threshold from terrorizing the civilian population to generating a stoic response that such attacks are a part of the war and have to be endured. Indeed, attacks on national territory have often tended to unify a country and silence critics of the war. Typically, the result is a consensus that the military must focus on whatever warfighting tasks will bring the war to a successful conclusion. The potential for public pressure to affect military operations seems to be more significant the earlier in the conflict any such attack occurs. The entire nation is likely to become more integrated with the war effort (and thus less likely to overreact to a marginal threat) the longer and more intense the conflict. This, however, does not hold true across all historical examples. For example, the British public, which had so stoically endured the *Luftwaffe* raids of 1940-1941, panicked in reaction to the V-1 and, especially, V-2 rocket attacks later in the war. The rockets were a new weapon, used against a public that felt victory was coming closer every day. Thus, the renewed threat was a shock -- in 1940, the British felt themselves besieged, by late 1944, they felt themselves to be on the eve of victory. As well, the rockets arrived with very little warning time, in contrast to the long warning that the early warning system (primarily the radar stations) was able to give prior to the arrival of enemy aircraft. Thus, even minor attacks can cause a significant psychological effect well into a war.

Before attempting to apply too many of the lessons of past wars to a future conflict, it is important to consider the changes wrought in the last 50 to 100 years. Obviously, many factors influencing this discussion have changed since Confederate raiders operating off the New England coast created panic in shipping circles. In the days of the Civil and Spanish-American Wars, the threat to the coast was a tangible one -- if it could not be seen, it could not inflict damage. Similarly, defenses against the threat were readily visible. Thus, during the Spanish-American War, the Navy received substantial pressure to station ships in as many ports as possible in the hopes that the community would then feel reassured because it would be able to see at least one ship that could defend it from the potential threat that lay over the horizon. With the advent of submarines, aviation and, more importantly, long-range munitions, visibly present defenses are less effective. Although coastal antiaircraft batteries could fire on attacking aircraft or cruise missiles, they would be of no use against the carrier or submarine that launched them. Today, war is more remote in a physical sense, but more immediate in terms of the potential threat to noncombatants.

Another major change is that widespread censorship has become unmanageable. The quantity of information available to the public has also increased in the postwar era. In World War II, the control of information proved much more difficult than it had been in World War I as a result of the significant developments in radio and the great spread of telephones. Today wartime censorship would be much more difficult than in World War II. Information flow is more rapid, of much greater volume, and carried out through many more media than ever in the past.¹ Rapid expansion in publicly available communications continues to be the most likely path for the foreseeable future. The sheer numbers of present-day communication links and devices would make any attempt at the strict control of information much more difficult than it was in either World War I or World War II. In addition, there has been a perceptible social change in the media attitude to governmental control. While not impossible, a voluntary campaign such as the one in World War II seems less likely to succeed with a media that has a much greater sensitivity to First

1. Broadcasting serves as a good example of the proliferation of media that any censorship program would confront. During World War II, the Office of Censorship dealt with a total of 900 commercial broadcasters. As of 1986, there were 8807 commercial radio stations (4863 AM, 3944 FM), 919 commercial television stations, and 7600 Cable television systems in the United States. There has been a ten-fold increase in the number of commercial radio stations alone (this is without considering the large public radio network) but there has been an equally impressive expansion into the new medium of television as well. (Price, *Report on the Office of Censorship*, p. 34; U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, *Statistical Abstract of the United States, 1988*, Washington, D.C., GPO, December 1987, p. 523.)

Amendment questions and, in general, a much more hostile attitude to government. In addition, much of the reasoning for the general censorship on the Japanese balloon-bombing campaign was to deny the Japanese any confirmation that their scattershot weapon was achieving any effect (or even arriving in the United States). Any presumed Soviet threat can be assumed to be of much greater accuracy than the wind-delivered balloons, and general targeting information will be undeniable. To some degree, information about the detailed results of attacks, especially against military targets, could be controlled by the normal channels of military security, however, whether through spies on the ground or satellites in space, the Soviets would be likely to be able to gather at least some information about a strike's effectiveness.

Another difference between past and future conflicts is the existence of nuclear weapons. What might once have been considered a minor threat, before the reality of nuclear weapons, might today cause a great reaction. The U.S. mainland suffered essentially no damage or casualties during World War II. In truth, CONUS has not suffered significant war damage since the Civil War. The specter of nuclear warfare constantly threatens to change this record. The implicit threat of widespread destruction makes it impossible to gauge the potential for great and perhaps irrational demands for the removal of the most immediate and publicly visible (and thus "accessible") threats (especially those that demonstrate their potential for damaging U.S. territory, even with conventional weapons).

In considering the potential that such threats might have for creating a political imperative to redeploy forces to augment CONUS defenses, it is important to consider the character of any war in which the United States and the Soviet Union fight each other. In its history, the U.S. has never been involved in a war in which not only is the nation's existence potentially at risk, but so too is the life of every single citizen. In a climate of true "total war," it is possible that the nation might be so completely mobilized physically and psychologically that military judgment will be the sole deciding factor of how best to pursue the conduct of the war. Thus, it is not only difficult to prognosticate the future, it is even difficult to determine the lessons of the past that are most relevant for the potential Soviet threat.

CONCLUSION

Despite the difficulties involved in extrapolating the historical record to future wars, some conclusions do seem to stand out as important guidelines. First, surprise and unexpected setbacks early in the war are probably the single most likely cause of a redistribution of forces and emphasis from offensive to defensive operations. Barring such early disasters as Pearl Harbor, however, the key to preventing a militarily undesirable reallocation of Navy forces appears to lie in the ability of the principal military commanders involved to explain clearly to the political leadership the rationale underlying the preferred force allocation and the cost of altering that allocation. The historical experience of the United States indicates that when the military has clearly and unambiguously enunciated the basis for its deployments and operations, despite the possibility of threats to CONUS, the political leadership has generally acquiesced to the professional judgment of the military commander even in the face of adverse public pressure.

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